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PANCHO AND PANCHITA.

14

A Tale of the Southwest.

BY

MARY E. MANNIX.

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
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CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

BROTHER AND SISTER 7

CHAPTER II.

PREPARATIONS 26

CHAPTER III.

PADRE GREGORIO'S VISIT 46

CHAPTER IV.

AT THE SPRINGS 64

CHAPTER V.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE 83

CHAPTER VI.

A HAPPY FORTNIGHT 96

CHAPTER VII.

A PLEASANT VISIT 113

CHAPTER VIII.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL 132

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PANCHO AND PANCHITA.

A TALE OF THE SOUTHWEST.

CHAPTER I.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

It had been a dry, hot, windy day, although it was the end of October. Usually at this season, the rains had begun; one or two light showers, at least, had washed the thick, powdery dust from the drooping branches of the pepper trees, which here and there, in front of some door-yard, formed the one bright spot of verdure on the arid landscape. But this year not a drop had fallen, and those who had predicted early and copious rains began to shake their heads dubiously as they looked up at the brilliantly cloudless sky, hoping vainly to find there

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some indication of an approaching downpour.

Farther up the valley, where the shining white sand stretched like a serpentine ribbon between shallow borders, the gently sloping verdure never entirely lost its green.

Standing amid the sparse willows and thick clumps of emerald rushes which defined it, one might pierce the dazzling sandy surface with a walking-stick and find water at three feet, or even not so deep, for this is the country where the river bed lies on top and the water underneath, except in winter, when, with the advent of the mountain rains, it fills up suddenly, often overflowing its banks, to the great damage of the surrounding ranches.

But as yet, at the season of which we write, the foothills still rose bare and brown in their stony aridity, and the *rancheros*,* domiciled at their base, began to long for the time when the winter rains should clothe them once more in robes of living green.

* The men employed on a ranch or farm used for grazing

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On the steps of an old *adobe** house, the only picturesque dwelling in the unattractive border town where every building bore the marks of neglect and decay, two children, a boy and a girl, sat side by side in the dusk of the rapidly vanishing day. The boy was about twelve, the girl a year and a half younger. They were both sturdy, well-formed, handsome children, with very dark blue eyes and curling light hair which the sun had burned to a yellowish brown. That part of their bodies which was covered by the nondescript, odd-looking garments clumsily fashioned by the Indian woman who was their faithful attendant was of the whitest, softest texture, but their sunburned faces, hands and feet were as dark as those of the little Mexican children who sometimes came to play with them, under the strict though kindly supervision of Serafina, in the *patio* † of the crumbling adobe structure which for years had been their home.

"It makes warm, this evening, don't you

*An unburnt brick dried in the sun. †Court.

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think, Pancho?" asked the girl, digging her bare feet into the dust.

"Now, 'Chita, there it is again," said the boy. "You will always speak in that way, and it gets worse with your English, and maybe when our people come to find us from across the ocean they cannot tell if you are a little English girl, or just a half Mexican, or an Indian, maybe!"

"What did I say wrong, *then?*" inquired 'Chita with an inward conviction that, despite his reproof, her brother's English was not much better than her own.

"You said it *makes* warm, and not it *is* warm. Oh, how many times did not papa speak to you for that!"

"*Hace mucho calor, hace mucho calor,*"* murmured the little one under her breath, looking up into her brother's face as she added in a louder tone, "That is right, Pancho; it *makes* warm!"

"In Spanish—yes," replied the boy; "but in English—no. It would be better, I

*It is very warm—it is very warm.

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know, for papa said it, if we could always speak English, but how can that be, when no one understands, except now and then a tourist from over the line? It cannot be, as you see, 'Chita. We can only do as he said, speak English *always* when we are alone together, and Spanish with Serafina and the others."

"I like best the Spanish, it is prettier and easier too," said 'Chita, with decision. "Why should we speak English, ever?"

"Oh, you know, 'Chita," said the boy in a reproachful tone, "it was the wish of papa that we should."

"Yes, you are right, Pancho," said the child. "I do want to please papa, but sometimes I forget. And they are so long in coming, those relations. But indeed, I do not care; I like better to stay here with Serafina. I should cry and scream if some day they would try to take us from her."

The boy took her small hand in his, while a smothered sigh escaped his breast.

"Yes, they are long in coming, he said,

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"but some day, perhaps, they will find us. It takes a great many weeks, maybe, for a letter to reach where they live. And papa was not sure, even then, that they would come. But he hoped, and said we must hope and pray."

"So says Padre Gregorio as well," replied the little girl.

"Yes, he says it is right that we should go to them."

"But not without Serafina?" pleaded the child, nestling still more closely to her brother.

"Of that we will not speak now," said the boy, gravely. "If they are nice, perhaps they will take her along."

"Oh, they will be nice, Pancho; papa was nice! Who was so nice as papa?"

"Yes, I think all the English must be fine people—the finest people," said the boy.

"Finer than Antonio or Josefina or Manuel's mother?" inquired the little girl.

"Oh, much finer, much," replied Pancho, with a confused vision of "tourists" in his

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mind, as compared with the humble but kindly neighbors who represented all that was "nicest" in the mind of his little sister.

"It is true that they are all good; Antonio and Josefina and the rest, but they are not English — they are Mexican."

"Mamma was Mexican," said 'Chita, stoutly; "who was more beautiful?"

"Not like them, 'Chita, not like them," he whispered. "You are too little yet; you do not understand."

'Chita yawned, kicked up a great cloud of dust with her toes, and looked wistfully into the house.

"I am hungry," she said, "I wish Serafina would make a light. It is so still inside."

At this moment the door opened, and an Indian woman appeared upon the threshold. She held a lamp in her hand.

"Children, where are you?" she said in Spanish, at the same time peering into the gathering darkness.

"Here, Serafina, here," was the reply, as they hastened up the rickety steps to the

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broad porch where she stood awaiting them.

"The *tortillas* * are ready, and the *frijoles* † I have kept hot since noon. Oh, they are very good now, they have been cooking so long. Are you not hungry?"

"Yes, yes," was the rejoinder and they followed her into the house.

While they sat, leisurely munching the *tortillas* she placed before them, now and then adding a spoonful of the red beans heaped on a couple of tin platters in front of them, the old Indian woman stood at the end of the table smiling and talking to them with caressing words. The room in which they were, though scrupulously clean, was also miserably poor, containing scarcely any furniture, although it was both broad and light. In one corner hung a picture of our Lady of Guadalupe, before which a light burned dimly; opposite this, a blackened crucifix, with bright crimson stains upon the thorn-crowned head and pierced hands and feet, loomed out in the darkness, sad and

* Little cakes. † Beans.

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realistic. To many it would have appeared repulsive, but to the children who sat directly under it, laughing and eating, it was the emblem of the death and suffering of the Saviour whom they had been taught to love and revere. Later they would meet before it to recite their evening prayers with Serafina, who made it her constant endeavor to regulate the lives of the little orphans just as their father would have wished. And he had loved this crucifix, for it had belonged to his Mexican wife, in whose family it had been treasured for many generations.

The children had left the table, and Serafina, still standing, as was her invariable custom, began to eat her own meal. She was about fifty years of age, very dark, of erect stature, and a most attractive countenance, naturally grave, but which became beautifully bright and pleasant when she smiled and this was not seldom, for, unlike most of her race, she was neither taciturn nor gloomy, though always preserving the reserve which is one of their principal char-

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acteristics. When she had finished, joining the children on the porch, she seated herself on the top step, listening to their lively prattle. But she did not speak, and after a while Pancho looked around, saying:

"Has Antonio come back from the city, Serafina?"

"Yes," was the reply, "and the Padre will be here for *Las Animas Muertas.*" *

"Oh, that is good," they both exclaimed.

"He could not come for *Todos Santos,*" † she continued. "The other father is ill, and he cannot leave."

"It will be the day after to-morrow, won't it?" inquired Pancho.

"No, the day after that," said the Indian woman. "And we must go over to the church to-morrow to get it ready."

"May we go too, Serafina?" asked 'Chita. "Pancho and I can rub the candlesticks and do many other things to help."

"Surely, *chiquita,*‡ you will go," was the reply. "Without you I could scarcely get

* The Feast of All Souls. † All Saints. ‡ Little one.

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through at all." She was smiling in the darkness, but the children did not know it.

"Will not Josefina and Guadalupe be there?" inquired Pancho.

"I think not," was the reply. "Antonio told me to-day that they would go to-morrow to the *rancheria,* * where their grandfather lies very ill."

"So much the better, then," said Pancho. "We will take down the ugly red and yellow paper flowers that papa hated so, and 'Chita and I will get some *tules* † and make long strings of them around the altar, and we will tie them about the candlesticks. Oh, they will look so pretty and green. And let us pull down that sheet from behind the *Madre Dolores,* Serafina, won't you? Papa thought that was ugly too, all covered with paper flowers pinned on."

"Softly, softly, Pancho," interrupted the old woman. "We cannot make such changes —the church does not belong to us. The

*A large farm, or collection of small farms.

† Large bulrushes.

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people here always had it so, and so it must remain. Would you hurt the feelings of Josefina, and Concepcion, and Maria, who are all so kind to you?"

"No, no, I would not," replied the boy, heartily. "But the sheet behind the statue — why do they pin it full of paper flowers — or why have a sheet at all?"

"Do you not know, Pancho?" asked 'Chita, eagerly. "It is in memory of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who covered the mantle of the Indian Juan Diego with flowers painted, oh, so beautifully, that never, never can any one make any so pretty, though they have tried, oh, many, many times. Maria told me about it once when I asked her."

"Yes, I know about Juan Diego's mantle, of course," said Pancho, thoughtfully. "Maybe I saw it more than once when I was a baby and lived in the city of Mexico. It is good to remember it, certainly it is good. But it is not Our Lady of Guadalupe who is in our church—"

"No, but once she was there," said Sera-

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fina, "once before the earthquake, and when that came Our Lady of Guadalupe fell down and they put Maria Dolores instead. But they left always the sheet with the flowers there, for some day, when more rains come and the crops are better, they will buy another statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe."

"Oh!" said Pancho, and for a moment no one spoke. It was the Indian woman who broke the silence.

"But anyway the flowers, ugly or no, must be put away for the Feast of All Souls, I have remembered. On that day there is nothing bright left upon the altar. We must get out the black calico from the big chest in the sacristy, and pin on the white cross, and hang it in front of the altar, and the candlesticks we must twine around with the black gauze that la Senora Montana gave two years ago. That will be pretty, I think, children."

"But it is so sorrowful," said 'Chita mournfully; "so sorrowful."

The Indian woman took the little brown hand in her own as she replied:

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"Yes, *querida,** but it reminds us that we must pray for the friends and relations who are dead. It is good that we do so."

"Yes," said the child. "And afterwards in the night-time will there be the procession again, like every year?"

"Surely," said the Indian woman. "And many candles, oh, many candles will be burned. Antonio's boy brought to-day several boxes. Some he has already opened and sold many, because they want to have them before the Indians come from the foot-hills."

"Oh, I hope they have bought enough this time," said the tender-hearted 'Chita, her tones full of anxiety. "Don't you remember last year there were not enough, and some of the old Indian women cried and cried?"

"Yes, and I remember, too, that you and Pancho, my sweet children, gave them yours and your dear father had only one."

"Papa does not mind," said Pancho, "if we put candles or not, so that we pray for his soul, and for mamma's."

* Dear.

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"And so that he knows *why* we did not put them," interposed 'Chita.

"Surely," was the reply. "But he knows everything in heaven."

"Or in purgatory, where he may still be suffering because of his sins," said the old woman.

"Papa suffered so much here, and he was so good, that I do not think he is still in purgatory," answered Pancho.

"But we do not know. Let us hope, but we do not know," said Serafina, "And then if we do all that we can, and he does not need, some other soul will benefit."

"Perhaps Padre Gregorio will bring the letter when he comes," said Pancho. "If he does not, I shall not believe it is coming."

"Oh, it will come, Pancho," said 'Chita, confidently. "Papa said to have patience and it would come."

"It is nearly a year since the last time Padre Gregorio wrote," said Serafina, "but it is so very far, maybe there has not been time. Those English, maybe they are slow; I think

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they are," she continued, with the single idea of comforting the children.

But Pancho turned to her quickly, saying:

"You mistake, my good Serafina. It is the Spanish and the Mexicans who are slow. Papa had no patience with them, and who was so quick as he? No, no, Serafina, it is that they do not want us, maybe."

"Oh, then I will be glad. I will be glad," cried 'Chita, putting her curly head in the Indian woman's lap; "for then they cannot take me away from my dear, dear Serafina."

"If perhaps they would let me go? I would like better not to part from my children. Every night I ask Our Lady for this," said the old woman.

"When they know how good you are they will take you," said Pancho, confidently. "I am sure of it. We should be dead now but for you, and I shall tell them of it when I see them."

"How will you know them?" inquired 'Chita, innocently.

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"Will they not come to seek us?" said the boy. "Did not papa write, and also Padre Gregorio? Often when the tourists come and I am at the shop for something I look at them, and I think, perhaps this one, perhaps that one, is my uncle seeking for me, and then I run home quick and wash my face, but he never comes."

"My poor Pancho!" said Serafina, caressingly; but little 'Chita laughed.

"And why do you laugh, my sweet?" inquired Serafina.

"It is so funny, I cannot help it."

"What is funny, *querida?*"

"That Pancho should run home to wash his face."

"And yours, too, very often I have washed at those times," said Pancho, good-humoredly. "But you did not know why."

"After this I shall know," said the child, "and I shall run away, and maybe rub my cheeks in the mud, so that they do not like me for being dirty, and then maybe they will not take me away from my second mother."

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A bell tinkled in the distance.

"That is dinner at the *comandante's*,"* said Serafina, rising. "It will be half-past seven, and we must get up early to-morrow. There is the house to be cleaned, and the Padre's room to get ready; and Pancho, if you can borrow Juan Moreno's mule you may go down to the springs for some water. Padre Gregorio likes so much the water of the springs, and afterwards it will be to arrange the church for *Las Animas Muertas*."

"And may I go with him to the springs?" pleaded 'Chita as they followed the Indian woman into the house. "I do love to go there. That is such a pretty road between the green, green *tules*, with the branches sometimes meeting above, and the smell of all the wild herbs. May I go, Serafina?"

"If Pancho can have the wagon, yes; but not behind him on the mule. Ever since you have fallen off and hurt your head, I can never let you ride that way again."

*The commanding officer of the place.

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"The wagon is there; I saw it to-day," said Pancho. "You may surely go, I think, Chita."

The children were soon in bed, but long after the sound of their regular breathing told her that they slept the Indian woman, wrapped in a shawl which covered her head and shoulders, knelt before the image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, telling her nightly beads. That pious duty over she, too, sought repose.

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CHAPTER II.

PREPARATIONS.

EARLY next morning the little household was astir. The children were sent forth to gather pepper boughs, as they always delighted in decorating the shrine in the Padre's room with the light and feathery branches, brightened at this season by the small crimson berries which form their fruit. This shrine was a niche in the thick adobe wall between the two deep-seated windows. It contained a small image of Our Lady of Sorrows, wearing a long black stuff mantle with a widow's veil upon the head. She was seated in a low chair of carved wood, black with age; upon her knees rested the figure of Our Saviour, pale and bloody, as He had been taken from the cross. A quaint copper lamp

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stood in front of the image, which was always burnished and lighted at the coming of Padre. At other times it remained unlit, for oil was scarce and expensive at *Las Pimientas,** so-called by the original owners, from the grove of pepper trees by which it was surrounded.

When the children returned, laden with branches, they placed them under the pump, giving them a generous bath, which they needed badly, on account of the thick coating of dust hiding their rich and vivid green. This completed, they shook the boughs vigorously in the sun to dry them.

"Are they not beautiful now, Pancho?" said 'Chita, as they lifted the boughs once more to their shoulders in order to carry them into the house. "See how green, and how clean!"

"Yes!" replied Pancho, "just as if the rain had come in the night and washed them."

When they entered the guest chamber,

* The peppers.

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they found the windows wide open, and a heap of Manzanitas roots already laid in the capacious fire-place, a rare feature in any Mexican house, but which had been a compromise of the former proprietor to the wishes of his American wife. When they had arranged the pepper branches above and at the back of the niche where the copper lamp was already burnished and trimmed, they stood back in the middle of the room to admire the effect.

"It is beautiful," said 'Chita. "Oh, how will the Padre like to see those branches—so green, with the red berries—but let us find Serafina."

They hurried forth again to look for her, and found her in an old out-building filling an empty mattress, which she had washed and ironed that morning, with fresh, clean hay, furnished by Antonio, for the bed of the Padre. Over this, on the narrow iron bedstead, would be placed a second very thin mattress made of corn husks pulled into long thin strips. A pair of sheets and a

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pillow slip of coarse but immaculate linen were airing on the line, and across the low broken wall which separated the yard from the now unused *corral*,* some beautiful Mexican blankets were lying. At sight of them Pancho turned hastily away, with a pang; they always reminded him of his old home, whence they had been brought by his father. But in 'Chita's heart they excited no sad reminiscences.

"Oh, the pretty, soft blankets!" she exclaimed, laying her cheek against them lovingly.

"'Chita," said Pancho, "you are like a kitten, just like a kitten, with your face always rubbing whatever pleases you."

"That is her way, the dear," said Serafina. "Soon I shall be finished; and now if you will run to the butcher and tell him I am waiting for the chicken he promised, I shall make it ready this afternoon."

"Will not that be too soon?" asked Pancho. "Padre Gregorio does not come till to-morrow."

* A pen or inclosure for animals.

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"Oh, not at all too soon," said Serafina; "I must kill, and pluck and clean it, and then it is to be prepared with the onions and peppers, and cooked very, very slowly for many hours. To-morrow I shall not have time, because of the cleaning of the church. You know, Josefina will not be here. We must do it all ourselves. And the next day, the chicken will be better for the second cooking. *Tortillas,* too, I must make to-morrow after we have arranged everything in the church. Oh, there will be much to do, but with the help of the little ones all will go quickly."

The children bounded away, 'Chita jumping and laughing in an exuberance of joy and anticipation. Presently they came to the village, which consisted of a single street, about half a mile in length, ungraded and unpaved, with the houses standing at irregular angles on either side. Most of them opened directly on the street, and behind a few might be seen indications of a garden. Water was too scarce and the in-

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habitants too idle and indifferent for irrigation in that poverty-stricken border town. The only building of any pretentions was the Custom House, on the broad piazza of which the indolent looking officers sat and smoked during the largest part of their working hours.

Every other house was a saloon patronized by the *rancheros* and horse-dealers who abounded in the vicinity. The curio shop was the source of considerable income to its proprietor, who was also the owner of the solitary grocery of which the place could boast.

When Pancho and his sister arrived at the butcher's, that worthy man was in the act of taking some of the smoking hot *tamales* * from a great pot on the stove which stood at the end of the shop.

"Oh, it makes my mouth water," said 'Chita, as she inhaled the spicy odors of the famous Mexican delicacy.

"Hush, 'Chita!" whispered Pancho, "José Antonio will think you want one."

* A dish of crushed Indian corn seasoned with meat and red peppers.

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"And so I do," replied 'Chita, "Serafina always forgets to buy, and when she remembers they are gone."

Pancho did not like *tamales* himself, wherefore, no doubt, his want of sympathy with his little sister's longings.

"I am like papa," he said. "I do not like the hot things—neither *tamales* nor *Chili con carne.*"*

"But it is not bad to like them!" protested 'Chita. "Padre Gregorio eats very well the chicken with *Chili* and a *teenty* pinch of garlic which Serafina prepares."

It all ended by José Antonio's presenting each of the children with a *tamale,* carefully wrapped in clean tissue paper, as he was accustomed to do for *"los Americanos,"*† when they came sightseeing in more or less numbers every day of the year. It was with the thought of Serafina in his mind that Pancho accepted his; otherwise he would have declined it. The chicken was ready,

* A dish of meat highly seasoned with red pepper.
† The Americans.

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José Antonio pronouncing it one of the finest he had sold that year, though to a critical eye it might have looked somewhat scrawny.

When the children returned, they found that Serafina had been deluging the floors with water, which necessitated them taking lunch under the pepper trees. Presently she came out with a plate of *tortillas* and a couple of very red apples, a luxury to the brother and sister, who seldom saw any kind of fruit, although "across the line," a dozen miles away, it grew in abundance. After they had finished, Pancho went to borrow the mule and wagon for their journey to the Hot Springs, about two miles distant. He soon returned, saying that Juan was going up the valley himself, and would take them in the wagon, if Serafina would permit.

Her consent was readily given, for Juan was a trustworthy old soul, to whose care she did not hesitate to commit them. Up one hill and down another they clattered along, over a road full of ruts and rocks, till it seemed as though the rickety wagon

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would go to pieces. But the children thought it a delightful ride.

At length they reached the top of a declivity from which could be had the first view of the springs. They were situated in a charming valley, almost entirely surrounded by low foot-hills, with the broad, round-topped mountain chain in the purple distance. The only building to be seen was a long, low, whitewashed frame shed, under the roof of which were "the Baths," famous, and justly so, for the curative properties of the water, which was pumped in very primitive fashion into the wooden tubs, escaping therefrom through a long wooden gutter into the sloping valley which it irrigated and rendered fertile all the year round. Numbers of white tents dotted the fresh, green landscape, smiling like a newly discovered oasis around the waste of arid, uncultivated land surrounding it. In these tents were domiciled the invalids who came to partake of the healing waters. Primitive as it was, nothing more delightful

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could be imagined than this mode of life, which brought health and vigor to those who pursued it.

A sudden sharp turn in the road brought our little party to the foot of the hill, where they descended from the wagon. A few men, white and Mexican, were seated on the porch of the bath-house, smoking and lounging. One of them, a fine stalwart-looking young fellow of about twenty-two, advanced to meet them. He was over six feet in height, straight as an arrow, with a swarthy skin, and large, soft dark eyes, like those of a gentle, kindly woman. He held out his arms, and 'Chita sprang into them, and thence to the ground.

"Oh, Ignacio," said Pancho, pulling two large jugs from the wagon, "we have come for some water. Padre Gregorio will be there for All Souls', and he will like some very well."

The young man took the jugs, swinging one in each hand, and followed the eager children down the path to the spring. Juan

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walked by his side, carrying a small cask on his shoulder.

"That is good news, that the Padre comes, Pancho," said Ignacio. "But I hope he may drive down while he is at San Juana to have a bath and some drinks hot from the spring."

"I think he will come, Ignacio," said 'Chita. "He says there is no water like this; he even likes it cold, but I do not see how any one can drink it, so nasty and smelling of eggs as it is."

Ignacio laughed. "I think it is fine, 'Chita," he said. "Better than soup, if you put salt and pepper in."

'Chita made a wry face, but Pancho said:

"Is that really true, Ignacio?"

"Yes, it is," said the young man, gravely. "At least many persons say they like it as well."

Depositing the jugs on the porch, Ignacio took 'Chita by the hand and led her down to the spring, which bubbled up from the earth, now with a scarcely perceptible effort, and again in a series of sharp, quick spurts,

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the water overflowing the primitive basin of which it was the centre, and spreading out on all sides till it formed a shallow pool about four feet in depth, widening on either side a distance of eighteen or twenty feet. As it receded from the source it gradually became narrower until it disappeared and was absorbed by the sandy soil, which lay green and moist above it as far as the eye could reach. Ignacio took a gourd which hung on a post near the basin, and filling it with water offered it to the little girl. But she pushed it away, saying:

"Give it to Pancho. He likes it."

The boy did not refuse it. Whether he really liked it was doubtful, for he was some time in disposing of it, but he said:

"It is good; it is wholesome—it cures diseases. Papa liked it well."

"But it did not cure him," said 'Chita.

"He came not soon enough to drink of it, *chiquita*," said Ignacio. "It has cured many. Oh, if we had money, and could put up a big hotel here, for the rich people to

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come, we would soon be rich too. Persons have said there is no water like it anywhere—persons who have been all over the world."

"But why are you not rich, Ignacio?" asked Pancho. "Once I heard papa say that all of this valley belonged to you and your family. And see how broad it is—one cannot see the end."

"Oh, this valley, yes, and much more, beyond the hills," said Ignacio, with a smile that was half sad—half bitter. "But of what worth when it can produce nothing; when there is no means of irrigating?"

"If you could sell it, Ignacio," continued Pancho. "Maybe some rich 'boomers' like they tell of at the Post Office might buy and bring in water, like at San Mateo."

"We cannot sell—it is in law," sighed Ignacio. "There are too many heirs—and some are not yet grown. And so we must just stay here and wait."

"How many thousand acres did the King of Spain give to your grandfather, Ignacio?" asked Pancho.

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"One hundred and sixty thousand," was the reply. "But it was to my great-grandfather, Pancho, Santiago Morado."

"And why did the King give him so many acres?"

"For fighting his battles by land and sea," said Ignacio, proudly. "He was a captain of Spain."

Pancho looked up at him with a vague admiration, as though expecting to find some reflection of the deeds of the valiant ancestor in the person of his descendant. Truly, the dignity was not lacking, nor the noble carriage, although the outward clothing of this son of the Spanish hidalgos was somewhat incongruous. But Pancho was entirely unmindful of this. In fancy he could see Ignacio mounted on a fine charger at the head of a fighting legion, and he said, "You would look grand riding thus, Ignacio."

"Riding how?" queried Ignacio.

"At the head of the soldiers. I was thinking how well you could lead your men, for you are such a splendid horseman."

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Ignacio smiled. "Surely I would look well," he answered, glancing down at his blue overalls and hob-nailed shoes. "Surely, I would look very well indeed, Pancho." But the children did not perceive the veiled sarcasm of his words, and 'Chita said:

"Come, Pancho, drink quickly your cup of nasty water. I want some *piñons* * from Ignacio's basket. And soon we must go home, or it will be late."

So saying she skipped away to a shed at the rear of the bath-houses, and soon returned with her apron full of nuts, which she sat on the edge of the porch to crack and eat. She was crunching them with her pretty teeth when the others came up, carrying the jugs, which they had filled with the steaming water.

"I do not like it cold," said Ignacio. "It is not well that the Padre must drink it so."

"Ugh! I do not like it any way, cold or hot," cried 'Chita, with a shrug of her shoulders.

* The edible nuts of the pine.

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"But it makes money for Ignacio and his brothers, when the people come to stay here and drink it."

"Yes, it is my bread as well as my drink," said Ignacio, seating himself by the side of 'Chita, of whom he was very fond.

"Tell me about it again, Ignacio, how it came to be found?" she said, putting some nuts between his lips.

"How many times have I told you that story, *chiquita?*" replied the young man, smiling kindly down into her uplifted eyes

"But I want to hear it once more, so that I may think of it when I see Tomas. How old is he now, Ignacio?"

"About one hundred years, I think," said Ignacio.

"Yes, that is right; last year you said he was ninety-nine. Oh, he is so wrinkled and funny—I almost want to run away when I see him."

"He would never hurt you, 'Chita," said Ignacio. "And he was always good. Well, I will tell you again the story. One winter—

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it was twenty years ago, there was not much rain, and my father had a great many stock then—"

"You must say a great *deal* of stock, Ignacio," interrupted 'Chita. "Sometimes I fail in the English, too, but I know 'a great many stock' is not right."

Pancho and Ignacio exchanged smiling glances.

"I thank you very much for telling me, 'Chita," said Ignacio; "I am so glad to learn to speak English well."

"Now go on," said 'Chita, tossing a handful of *piñons* to her brother.

"It was good feeding, here in this valley, and Tomas was sent by my father to care for the stock. One day my father came to see, but he could not find him. After a while he walked from behind some bushes and he said, 'Plenty good, hot water there, señor,' pointing back."

"And what did your father do then, Ignacio?"

"He looked, and there it was—the hot

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spring. Tomas had dug a little hole in the ground and was drinking of it."

"How did he know?"

"His father had told him once that in this valley long ago—before the white man came—was boiling water coming out of the ground, but the floods had covered up the springs. He was thirsty and thought he would look, and so it was."

"And what did your father do then?"

"Nothing; but after, when all the stock died, and there was no rain he told some people to come and bathe and drink, for he had tried it himself, and he knew it would make them well. And they came—and from across the line many—and so it went, and here we are."

"How many years now are you at the springs, Ignacio?" asked Pancho.

"Eleven years. Since I am eleven years I have been here, making music on the pump."

"And are you never tired?"

"Of making music? Yes, often—always."

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"But you see many people?"

"Yes, but it is not the life I would like."

"What would you like, Ignacio?"

"To go to school and learn many things."

'Chita laughed merrily. "You are too big to go to school," she said. "You are a man."

"With much to learn, *chiquita*," he replied, a little sadly. "When my father was a boy, his father had in the house a tutor to teach his children, and now—how am I?"

"It is a pity, Ignacio," said Pancho. "But you are always reading, when you have time."

"Yes, I can now read very well in the English newspaper — and I can write some. When persons come here who are learned, I like to speak with them, that I may learn good English."

"I believe that already you speak as well as we do, does he not, 'Chita?" inquired Pancho.

"Better than me, at least," said 'Chita, "by the way you are always saying, Pancho."

Juan now made his appearance from a

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distance, where he had been conferring with Alejandro, Ignacio's brother, regarding some wood. "Come, children," he said. "It is getting late—are you ready to go?"

"Of course we are ready," said 'Chita. "But I do not like to leave the *piñons*."

"Here are some to take with you," said Ignacio, producing a paper bag from a corner of the porch. "I filled this for my sister, Maria, but I can get her some more. And when will you come with Serafina for a few days to the springs?"

"Soon—after the first rain, she says," answered Pancho. "For then it will not be dusty, and it will be cool just how she likes it."

"*Bien*," said Ignacio. "I shall be glad."

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CHAPTER III.

PADRE GREGORIO'S VISIT.

"ARE there many at the springs?" asked Serafina, when the children had returned, and Pancho had emptied a jar of the sulphur water into the *olla** which stood under the largest pepper tree, so that it might keep fresh and cool for the coming of the Padre.

"I do not know," was the reply. "We only saw four or five men on the porch of the bath-house. It may be there were some in the tents. Ignacio said that we must come soon, and I told him we were going after the first rains."

"I love Ignacio," said 'Chita. "I love him better than any one but you and Pancho, Serafina."

* A water-pot.

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"Ignacio is good," said the old woman. "He is too good for here."

"And why too good for here?" asked 'Chita, the curious.

"Because he is of so fine a nature, and so different from most of those who live about here. The family are very well, all of them; but he is the best of them — much the best—so kind and good, and always working."

"Why do they not all stay at the baths?" inquired Pancho. "It is so far for Ignacio to walk — three miles up the valley every morning and night, and often it is the middle of the night when he can go home."

"He has such care for his sisters that he will not bring them down there to meet always strangers, though I think it would not hurt. The mother is with them, and they could help; but he says they do not know the ways of *los Americanos*. And it is so; but they could learn. Yet he is very proud, for his great-grandfather was a captain. He came from old Spain."

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"Yes, we know," said Pancho. "He is so quick to learn. He can read and write English now, Serafina."

"For six days now you have not studied, *mis queridos*," * said Serafina, with a sigh. "Why is it?"

"We have forgotten," said Pancho. "And that book we know by heart. I will ask the Padre to send us a new book, and then we shall study very hard."

"Why does not the cousin of Ignacio, the Señor Morales, who has the big *rancho* by Santa Maria—why does he not send him to school? His boys go away far — at San Francisco."

"Oh, they are not friends, there," said Serafina. "It is that the mother of Ignacio is an Indian, and the others do not like."

"And why not?" queried 'Chita, indignantly. "Are you not an Indian, and who so nice as my Serafina?"

The face of the old servant brightened,

* My dears.

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and she said with a smile, "All are not like my 'Chita; and it is right perhaps that they are not pleased. It is not for the whites and Indians to marry. But Ignacio is not ashamed of his mother, nor any of them. They are good to their mother."

"Surely one must be good to his mother," exclaimed Pancho. "When I am rich, I shall send Ignacio to school; perhaps I shall take him to England when I go."

"It is a kind heart," said the Indian woman, patting his curly head. "But it is true that some day if they sell the land, he may have plenty of money of his own."

"If you could see his sisters, how pretty they are, Serafina — not dark, like Ignacio, but white like Pancho and me," said 'Chita.

"White, like us!" cried the boy. "Much whiter; with beautiful brown hair."

"I have seen them," said Serafina. "They never go out without covering on their head. They are careful. There are few so pretty girls as they."

"And the mother?" asked Pancho.

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"She is as dark as I am; but very pretty she must have been when she married the father of Ignacio. But I must now see to my chicken, and to-morrow, if you are good, I will give you a little bit."

The child laughed, well knowing that after the Padre's portion had been reserved, they would have all they could eat, and sat down to their supper of *frijoles* and *tortillas* as contentedly as though it were not their usual daily diet the whole year round.

Next morning they started off with Serafina for the church, a small square building of *adobe*, standing on a slight elevation, at a little distance from the stone monument which was the dividing line between Mexico and the United States. Santa Juana was so seldom visited by a priest, that the church was always kept locked except when opened for the inspection of tourists from the American side who swarmed daily into Santa Juana during "the season." No fence enclosed it, no shrub or blade of grass grew near it; save for the shining cross which

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crowned its tiled roof, there was nothing to distinguish it from the rest of the unlovely buildings which dotted the barren landscape. As Serafina threw open the heavy door, a whiff of tomb-like dampness met her nostrils. She hastened to open the windows to the fresh air and sunlight, a task in which Pancho assisted her. There were no pews, nor even seats, save a few chairs near the door, placed there for the accommodation of visitors who were not accustomed to squat on their heels during the Mass. The altar was decked with the bright red and yellow artificial flowers, which Pancho found so distasteful.

He speedily removed them, however, and in a short time carried them behind the altar, together with the candlesticks. When Serafina had swept and dusted the church she opened a large chest in the sacristy, and proceeded to take therefrom a number of rich vestments which she spread out to air. Among them were a couple of exquisitely embroidered shawls, which had been formerly

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used as canopies in processions of the Blessed Sacrament. At the bottom of this chest lay some mourning vestments with a quantity of black muslin and gauze, which they pinned in front of the altar and about the candlesticks.

After three or four hours' work, the chapel was ready for the morrow. While Serafina and the children were thus engaged, they had many visitors, women and girls from the village, as well as a crowd of little boys who sat in a row on the old *adobe* wall, regarding the proceedings with apparent interest, but none of them offered any assistance, which seemed to be neither expected nor desired.

It was noon, when, everything completed, Serafina and the children closed the church once more, and betook themselves home. As they neared the house, they saw a vehicle standing in front of the door.

"Oh, it is Padre Gregorio!" cried Pancho, beginning to run quickly, followed by 'Chita, while Serafina, disappointed at not being at home to receive the honored guest, made

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all the speed she could to keep up with them. But the children soon outdistanced her, and presently she saw the priest come out on the piazza, his hat in his hand.

"Oh!" she thought. "It is too bad. Maybe he will not know where we are and think to go away for his dinner." But now the children were nearly at the door. He saw them coming and nodded and smiled.

He was above the middle height, a most commanding figure, gracious and graceful in every movement. For many years he had worn a beard, because of some throat trouble; this gave him a venerable appearance, apart from his priestly dignity, which was his greatest charm. The children had no sooner reached him than they seized both hands and began to chatter in a manner which showed they felt perfectly at home with him who had treated them as a father since the death of their own, two years before.

"Welcome, Padre Gregorio!" they cried. "Oh, we are so glad, so glad!"

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"But how well you look," exclaimed the priest, looking first at one and then the other. "And how brown! Soon you cannot be told from the Mexicans."

"It is the sun, Padre Gregorio," answered 'Chita, looking at her small brown hands.

"Of course it is the sun," said the priest. "And it is good for you. But the English relations—what will they say?"

"Oh, have you had a letter?" cried Pancho.

"No, not yet," replied the priest, cheerfully. "But one must come soon, I think."

"I do not believe they want us, or they would write," said Pancho, looking earnestly at Father Gregorio.

"And if not?" was the reply, as cheerfully as before. "If not, we shall have to do without. Don't you believe that God knows best?"

"Yes, yes, Padre Gregorio," they both answered, making way for Serafina, who had now arrived, tired and breathless, and knelt respectfully for the Padre's blessing.

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With many apologies for her absence, she went into the house, and soon had dinner prepared. After it was over, the priest went down to the village and with his own hands rang the bell to announce his presence. After a while people began to come for confession, although they were few in number. When they had finished, Padre Gregorio went about from house to house, asking if there were any children for baptism. There proved to be several, and he requested their parents to bring them to the church on the afternoon of the next day. It was nightfall when he returned to the *adobe* dwelling, where the children were eagerly awaiting him.

When they had retired to rest, after a most pleasant evening, Padre Gregorio sought Serafina on the porch where she sat in the darkness, and said, "Well, how does it go, Serafina? Is there enough money in the purse these days?"

"Yes, Padre," she replied. "There is much drawn-work ready now against the winter, when the visitors come, and there are

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baskets, too, I have made. All the summer I have been busy, and there is plenty of money."

"I am glad to hear it," said the priest. "But if ever you should need anything, let me know."

"I will," said the old woman. "But I do not like, Padre Gregorio, that you should have to give money so. Will they pay it to you again? The relations, I mean."

"What matter?" said the priest. "It is not much that I have done. I would gladly do more for their father's sake, as well as their own."

"And do you think they are coming soon for the little ones?"

"I cannot say," was the reply. "It begins to look as though they do not want the poor children. But we must keep them in good hopes until we know for a certainty."

After a few words more he retired, and Serafina also betook herself to rest. By seven o'clock the next morning a large crowd had assembled outside the church,

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some on foot, others in wagons, but the greater number came on horseback; the men presenting a picturesque appearance with their broad-brimmed hats, bright-colored neck handkerchiefs, and striped flannel shirts with a cloth or velveteen jacket flung over the left shoulder. The women were all attired in black, with shawls or *rebosas* * on their heads, instead of bonnets. There were also about fifty Indians from the village near the springs, where they raised mocking-birds and made baskets and *ollas* for a livelihood. These they disposed of during the tourists' season in Santa Juana, or carried three or four times a year to the nearest American town, about fifteen miles distant.

Nothing could exceed the devotion and reverence of the congregation during the solemn Mass of All Souls, albeit there was no music of any kind save the monotonous chanting of the Litany for the Dead after the Holy Sacrifice was finished.

In the afternoon there were several

* A sort of mantle.

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baptisms. About four o'clock, after a hasty repast, which Serafina had ready when he returned, Padre Gregorio took his departure, promising to send news of any letter that should arrive by the first messenger he could find who was coming to Santa Juana.

The children felt listless after he had gone, but Serafina reminded them that this was the night when the Indians went in procession to the graveyard, and they hastened to the box where their candles lay in readiness. When they opened it, both uttered a joyful cry.

"Here are six, ten, a dozen candles, Serafina," they exclaimed, "and we only put four away."

"Antonio brought the rest, because you were so good to carry water to Josefina last summer, when she was ill," said Serafina.

"How I love the good Antonio!" cried 'Chita, who loved every one that did her a kindness. "I will put a candle at the grave of the grandfather for him."

The sun had set and night was falling fast,

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as it always does in this semi-tropical country. Soon the trio joined the straggling crowd that came from the village towards the graveyard, which lay on the hillside surrounded by a rough white-washed paling, with a black wooden cross above the gateway. In this treeless spot, where the sun beat fiercely all day long for three hundred and fifty days in the year, it would have been useless to attempt to plant flowers or shrubs on the graves, which were, for the most part, marked only by a rude cross, badly lettered, giving the name and age of the deceased. One by one the lights began to shine out as they were placed at the head and foot of the graves.

Serafina lighted four candles which she put into the earth above a grave a little apart from the others. It was that of Mr. Eaton, the father of the children. When they had knelt reverently for a few moments, they arose, and, passing slowly along the beaten path, went towards that portion of the cemetery set apart for the Indians. Low

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wailing sounds were heard in the distance, which became clearer as a procession of black-garbed figures advanced, walking in couples, all bearing lighted candles in their hands. They were the Indian women from *La Pietra*, come to mourn over their dead. When they had reached the hallowed enclosure, they glided slowly about from grave to grave, sticking their candles wherever they could find a place for them, still wailing and crying. When they had disposed of them, an old woman, the wife of a former captain of the tribe, placed herself in the centre of a circle which closely surrounded her, and said a few words in her own language.

"What is she saying?" asked 'Chita, in a whisper.

"She is telling them never to forget to pray for their friends," answered Serafina, "for the time will soon come when they too will need prayers."

When the woman had finished, she knelt down and began to recite, in Spanish, the Litany of the Dead, to which the others

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responded. They then again formed in procession and proceeded slowly out of the grave-yard, singing a weird chant, which is given below for the benefit of our readers who would like to familiarize themselves with the peculiar style of music affected by these strange, melancholy people.

Resaremos Para Las Muertas.

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The dear departed on us call,
Oh, shall they call in vain?
Oh, hear them pleading, hear them sighing
In their fiery pain.
Fathers, mothers, dear; sisters, brothers,
Wives and husbands, pray for them; oh, pray!

Uplift your voices ye who wait,
Not ready yet to go;
Ah! supplicating, interceding,
Aid them in their woe;
Children, daughters dear; fathers, mothers,
Sons and husbands, pray for them; oh, pray!

Strange to relate, there were no men accompanying the women—at least within the confines of the cemetery. But when they passed into the open, numbers of them suddenly appeared upon the roadside, bringing up the rear of the procession. The doleful, weird chanting could be heard long after they were out of sight, now rising, now falling on the chill night air. From above, the stars looked down on the twinkling candles, which burned above the graves to the number of four or five hundred. Long after the children reached home they could see them from the window, illuminating the

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silent city of *Las Muertas;* and long after they were asleep, Serafina knelt, with arms outstretched, her face towards the rapidly decreasing lights, which one by one faded away. Until the last one had flickered into darkness, she remained, motionless as a statue, in the same position—praying for the dead.

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CHAPTER IV.

AT THE SPRINGS.

For three nights there had been plentiful showers, and already the trees began to show a faint tinge of green. The mornings were fresh and cool, but at mid-day the sun came down hotly still. On the fourth day Serafina looked up at the sky and said, "There will be no more rain, I think, for a little while. To-morrow, children, we will go to the springs."

"Good news, good news!" cried 'Chita, jumping up from her seat on the step and throwing her arms about the Indian woman's neck. "And I can go with Ignacio to shoot quail, and maybe he will take me to his home to see the goats. Oh, I am glad, I am glad!"

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"If *I* may not go to shoot quail, I do not think Serafina will let *you*, 'Chita," said Pancho. "I am older, and a boy. If papa had lived, I would by this time know how to shoot."

"That is true, Pancho," answered Serafina, "but I must take great care. If your papa were here he would know how to teach you. That would be different."

"Yes, yes, I know, Serafina," said Pancho. "I do not blame you at all, but I think I am big enough now to go with Ignacio. He is so careful; never, never does he carry the gun loaded in the wagon, or on horseback. May I not, perhaps, go along?"

"We shall see. But now, look what I have to show you. They came yesterday. Antonio brought them from the city."

They followed her into the house, where she opened a closet, and produced two dark-blue bathing-suits, trimmed with red.

"Oh, what joy!" exclaimed 'Chita, seizing the one which she supposed to be meant for her, and holding it in front of her. "Now

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we can go in the pool and learn to swim, if some one will show us. Do you know how to swim, Serafina?"

"Not I," was the reply. "Never would you see me in that pool, but there will, perhaps, be some who can swim there, and you may watch them, and so perhaps learn. But you do not ask whence came these pretty bathing-clothes?"

"You bought them for us, I think," said Pancho, "and you were very good to do it."

"I did not, indeed, *querido*," said Serafina. "Not money enough have I to spare for that, though I would like. It was Padre Gregorio who sent them."

"How did he know to send them?" asked 'Chita. "The good Padre Gregorio— I love him."

"Ah, I know," said Pancho, quickly. "And I feel ashamed. Do you not remember, 'Chita, that you said to him, 'We are going to the springs for a few days, and, maybe, we will go in the pool if Serafina can fix for us some bathing-clothes.' And then

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you said, 'Oh, how pretty bathing-clothes have some little girls and boys that once I saw there.' Yes, that made him think to do it, 'Chita, and it is too bad that he spent his money that way for us."

"No, it is not too bad," said 'Chita. "It is very good. He will like to do it, for he loves us, and he knows that it makes us happy. Is it not so, Serafina?"

"Yes, you are right," was the reply. "But they are so pretty that I do not like that you should spoil them in the water."

"Oh, the water will not spoil them," said 'Chita, gayly running off with the bathing-suit in her hand. "They are made to wear in the water."

Presently she returned, arrayed in the blouse, short skirt and trousers.

"I think it looks *so* pretty," she said. "The red braid all around makes it look *so* pretty. Do let me run down and show it to Josefina."

But Pancho as well as Serafina vetoed this at once, and she was reluctantly obliged to

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resume her usual every-day garments. When she returned the Indian woman said, "You may go now, children, down to Antonio and say to him that to-morrow by eight we will be ready for the springs. Ask him to come with the wagon, and loan the little oil-stove, if Josefina does not need it any more this year."

They bounded off to do her bidding, and soon returned on horseback behind Ignacio, whom they met near the post office. He would not dismount, saying that he must be at home by ten, adding, "It is good that you all are coming, Serafina, and I am glad that I know, for I will clear out the large tent, where no one will come any more this year, so that you may have plenty of room. It will be all ready when you are there. *Adios,*" * and waving his hand, he rode away.

Antonio arrived promptly at eight the next morning. After shutting the windows and fastening the doors, Serafina and the children were soon seated in the wagon, sur-

* Good-by.

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rounded by sundry boxes and bags which contained clothing and a supply of groceries. Strapped on at the back were mattresses and blankets, for Serafina was cleanliness personified, and would rather have lain on the bare ground than to have sought repose on bedding which had been used by all sorts of persons, with all kinds of diseases.

Their progress was somewhat slow, because of the heavy load, though to-day there were two mules harnessed to the wagon. When they reached the top of the hill which gave them the first sight of the tented valley, 'Chita stood up and waved a bathing-towel which she had taken from the bundle for that purpose.

Almost immediately they saw Ignacio advancing from the porch of the bath-house, and by the time they reached the end of the shady lane which led through the cottonwoods into the springs, he was waiting to receive them. After the first joyous greeting had been exchanged he took 'Chita by the hand, saying to Antonio, "If you will

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drive up to the tent it will be better. Then we can easier take out the things. See, there is your house," he smilingly continued, pointing to a large tent, standing on a slight elevation at some distance from the others, which were not more than ten feet apart. "I had it moved yesterday, for I know you like to be alone. And it is in the very prettiest and driest place, sloping on all sides, with the sycamore behind for shade. In the front, Joaquin will put up a *ramada* * so that you can sit out even when the sun shines, for that is why you come."

Serafina smiled her thanks, and they began unloading the wagon. The tent was quite large, with a clean board floor, which she and Ignacio at once covered with a couple of Navajo blankets, brought with the rest of the stores. Ignacio next stretched a line across the middle of the tent, on which Serafina hung a couple more, thus dividing it into two apartments. In the front portion, canvas cots were placed at either side.

* A branch-covered bower or arbor.

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On them Ignacio stretched the mattresses, and 'Chita and Pancho proceeded to make up their beds with clean sheets, and more Navajo blankets. An empty dry-goods box, covered with an old but gayly colored shawl, served as a table and wardrobe. Two splint bottomed chairs completed the furniture. On the other side of the partition the Indian woman and Ignacio were unpacking the oil-stove and a few dishes and cooking utensils. Two large boxes, produced by Ignacio, answered for kitchen and dining-tables, two smaller ones for seats. Nails driven in the tent posts held the cooking-utensils—the dishes when not in use being kept in the boxes, which each contained a couple of shelves. In a corner a roll of coarse Mexican blankets laid upon a cot constituted Serafina's bed. The flaps of the tent were pinned back at either side, making a current of air at all times.

The impromptu kitchen looked down into the valley. The front compartment commanded a view of the spring, the pool, the

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bath-houses and the near foot-hills, behind which three giant peaks lifted their towering heads. While they were arranging their belongings, Joaquin appeared in the distance, almost hidden beneath an immense bundle of willow branches, which he carried on his shoulders.

"Oh, here comes Joaquin!" cried 'Chita, and Pancho ran out from the tent, where he had been helping Serafina, to greet the newcomer. He was a gigantic Indian, about sixty years of age, with the most rugged of faces, and the most musical of voices. Smiling from under his green leafy burden, he greeted the children with many welcomes, and soft caressing words. When he had deposited his load, they accompanied him to the river bank for another supply.

"It takes a great many branches to make a *ramada*, doesn't it, Joaquin?" said 'Chita, as she tripped along, clinging to the old man's hand.

"Yes," he replied. "A great many, and if one must build *two*, one must haul a double

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quantity. And after, one must go up the road for the lumber to make the posts."

"But why posts?" inquired Pancho. "Are not the thick branches of trees enough to stick in the ground?"

"No," said Joaquin. "They are not strong enough to bear the top, especially at this season of the year, when the wind may blow hard at any time, and throw down the whole."

"And why make two *ramadas*, Joaquin?" asked 'Chita, "and where? Last year we had but one."

"In order that the children and Serafina may have shade both morning and afternoon," was the reply. "In the morning the sun faces this way; in the afternoon that way; therefore you can have always shade. And if Serafina likes she can do the washing there at the back, and the sun will not be hot on her head when she works under the *ramada*."

After several journeys to and from the river, Joaquin announced that he had enough

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material for his purpose. Then taking a saw he went for the posts, accompanied by Ignacio. They returned in a short time, carrying them, and soon had them planted in the ground at either end of the tent, directly in front of the openings, at a distance of eight feet apart, each way, thus forming a good-sized square. Having stripped the leaves from some of the thickest boughs, a task in which he was assisted by Pancho and 'Chita, Joaquin stretched them from post to post on three sides, about two feet from the top, tying them securely with long strips of fibre, peeled from the fresh, green stems. In the same manner he constructed a roof, which he quickly covered with interlacing boughs, forming an agreeable shade. The sides being open, air could circulate freely, while the fierce heat of the sun could not penetrate the boughs which formed the picturesque and pleasant *ramada*. When it was finished, Joaquin and Ignacio brought a couple of rocking-chairs, which they placed in this delightful out-door sitting-room. "One for

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'Chita and one for Serafina," said Ignacio, as he deposited them on the ground. "As for Pancho, he never sits."

"On horseback I would like to sit behind you soon, when you go to shoot quail," said the boy, looking wistfully at Serafina, who had come to the doorway of the tent to announce dinner.

"If Serafina will," said Ignacio, with a smile.

"Perhaps," said the old woman. "It will be a great thing if I do," she continued. "With no other person would I let him go. But you are careful—as his own father, Ignacio. When do you go?"

"This afternoon," was the reply. "To-morrow come some visitors for a few days, and they would like game while they stay."

"And will you not eat with us now, Ignacio?" said Serafina. "I have warmed some *frijoles* in the black pot over the fire, which I made of some sticks. They are very good, with a nice piece of pork and some peppers."

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"With pleasure, I would," answered Ignacio, "if it were possible. Who will care for the baths while I do?"

"Will you, Joaquin?"

"Surely," said the man. "Though just now no one will come, and the campers have all bathed."

Ignacio needed no further persuasion. They were all soon seated merrily around the impromptu table, while Serafina waited on them, producing from a basket which she had hung on a tree behind the tent some persimmons and late grapes for dessert.

"And where did you get these, Serafina," asked Ignacio, after the children had finished expressing their pleasure.

"From Josefina, to whom a 'tourist' gave some yesterday, when she permitted her to take the picture of the little ones."

"So pretty are they, those little ones," said Ignacio. "But where is Antonio? He has not gone back yet to Santa Juana?"

"No," said the Indian woman. "He has gone down the valley to the Señora Marta,

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who will go to stay with them for a week. But first I gave him a little to eat."

When dinner was over, and the dishes washed and put away, she took 'Chita by the hand and went down to the pool. The child was clamorous for a bath in the steaming water, probably with a desire to put on her new bathing-suit. But Pancho wavered between a plunge and the wish to accompany Ignacio on his shooting expedition.

"You have plenty of time for both," said Ignacio, "and to wait a little for the bath. It is not good to go in so soon after you have eaten."

"When do you start for the quail?" asked the boy.

"About four. In an hour we will be back. It is now two," he continued, looking at an immense silver watch which he drew from his pocket.

"At twelve we had dinner," said Serafina. "At half past two you may go in, *queridos*, and for, perhaps, half an hour play around in the water. And while we wait, so that you

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are not impatient, let us go down and see old Tomas."

This expedition was welcome to both children. After a short walk down the sandy road, they came to a little hut among the bushes, closely sheltered from sun and wind, where lived the old Indian who had discovered the springs.

It was indeed a curious dwelling-place, built of the branches of interlacing trees, placed close together, the interstices being filled with clay, crumbling in many places, thus permitting the entrance of wind and rain.

"Does he live always here?" inquired 'Chita.

"Yes, always," said Serafina.

"But is it not cold in the winter, and wet when the rain comes?"

"Ignacio says that the skin of Tomas is like leather, so tanned and dried up by age and the sun," said Pancho. "He says that the old man cannot feel the cold or the dampness."

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"And does not the damp make the rheumatism come, Serafina?" inquired 'Chita. "When it rains, and you are in the house, even, you say it pains you."

"Tomas has lived all his life this way," said the Indian woman. "In a house he could not stay—it would smother him. And rheumatism, I think, he has never had."

By this time they were in front of the tent. It was so small that one within could not stand upright in it.

"Is he there?" whispered 'Chita, creeping closer to her protectress.

The Indian woman pressed her hand, making at the same time a peculiar sound between closed lips. It seemed to come from the depths of the throat, and sounded like this: "Huh-huh-huh."

A faint movement was heard inside; the flap of the tent was lifted and a head, looking more like an immense carved hickory nut than anything else, was thrust forth. A few patches of white hair grew on top; the re-

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mainder of the mahogany-colored surface was hard and shiny.

Serafina said a few words which the children could not understand. The flap of the tent ascended a little higher, was slowly fastened back, and the form of the old Indian was revealed. He was literally clothed in rags—the accumulation of years, tied, one above the other, about his attenuated body. Slowly and painfully he raised himself from the ground with the aid of a long staff, and motioned the trio to enter. 'Chita drew back; the interior was not inviting.

"'Chita," whispered her brother, reproachfully, "he will feel bad," at the same time making a step forward. But Serafina laid her hand upon his arm.

"He cannot see well," she said. "He does not know. And I do not think he is very clean. Do not go in, Pancho."

The old man extended his hand, whereupon she emptied the contents of the bag she carried on the ground beside him. It contained a supply of meat and bread. Imme-

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diately he sat down again, and began to eat ravenously, entirely regardless of his visitors.

"Come," said Chita, turning away, and pulling the Indian woman's dress. "He is such a dirty man; it makes me sick to look at him. Why does he not die, Serafina? He is too old to live any longer. Why does not God make him die, Pancho? Why not, do you think?"

This was a question her companion was unable to answer, but as they walked away, Pancho said very gravely: "It is not, perhaps, very nice to look at Tomas, 'Chita, but he is old and we must be good to him. Perhaps some day, if we live long enough, we too may be like that."

"Never, never!" exclaimed the child, passionately. "How can we look like Indians—dirty Indians, even if we are one hundred years old?"

Pancho's eyes opened wide with surprise and reproach. The look brought her to herself. Casting a swift, frightened glance up into Serafina's face, she threw herself in

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front of the old woman, clasping her waist, as she cried. "Oh, my dear, dear Serafina, forgive me if I have said anything bad. For you are Indian, too, though not that kind. Do not be vexed with 'Chita, Serafina. Oh, whom do I love like you? No one but Pancho!"

The faithful servant patted the curly head of the little offender; her face was not at all disturbed. "My darling could not anger me," she said, drawing the child close to her bosom.

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CHAPTER V.

A NEW ACQUAINTANCE.

A FEW minutes later the children were sporting around in the pool, throwing water on each other, diving up and down, pretending to swim, while Ignacio and Serafina watched them from opposite banks of the miniature stream. In the midst of their sporting and laughing, a man came out from one of the tents, with a pitcher in his hand which he was about to fill at the spring. He was of unusual height, with broad, square shoulders, and hurried down the path with long, quick strides. He wore a velveteen hunting-coat, frayed at the edges, a pair of stout corduroy knickerbockers, ribbed woollen stockings, and thick-soled but well-fitting

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shoes. He was smoking a short cob pipe, evidently with great enjoyment.

He paused at sight of the children, regarding them with an expression of interest and amusement. But 'Chita didn't propose to perform her antics for the benefit of strangers. Pausing abruptly in her amateur diving, she remained passively in the water, whispering to her brother: "I wish he would go away. Why must he look at us?"

"No harm in that," said Pancho. "The pool is not for us alone, *chiquita*. If he wished he might come in at any time."

"Then I would go out, if he was so rude as to come in while we are here."

"Of course, but he will not do it," and Pancho began to plunge about, scattering the water on his sister, who was now fixedly regarding the man on the bank.

"Pancho," she said at last, in a loud whisper, "he is like papa, that man."

The boy looked hurriedly around. "No," he replied. "So stout and strong is he—"

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"Yes," was the rejoinder, "but he is tall, and stoops a little, like papa. But it is the eyes, Pancho, that are so like, so blue and laughing."

"It is so, 'Chita," said her brother, after a slight pause. "And the smile, too — at first I thought not, but now that I look, there is something."

"See now, he laughs; did not papa wrinkle his forehead so?"

"Yes, he did," answered Pancho. "But in the world there are many people, I am sure, who resemble each other. Look at the two sons of Marco Moreno, for instance."

"Yes, but what a stupid thing to say, Pancho! Why should not the two sons of Marco, who are brothers, look like each other? But this man, he is a stranger, and never did I see any one so like to papa."

"Perhaps he is English," said Pancho. "The people of one nation are in some ways different from another nation."

"Many English we have seen, but none like this man," said 'Chita, on whom the

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real or fancied resemblance of the stranger to her dead father had impressed an unwonted gravity.

"What is wrong?" called out Ignacio at this juncture. "Is the water too hot?"

"Oh, no," said Pancho, beginning to move about in the pool. "We were only talking of something."

"He may stay, if he wishes," whispered 'Chita. "If he is like papa, I do not care," and with a shy backward glance at the stranger she made a long stride towards the shallower part of the pool.

"Are they your children?" inquired the man of Serafina, taking up his pitcher preparatory to departure.

"My children, Señor?" echoed the Indian woman, in surprise.

"Grandchildren, perhaps," he continued. "They are bright little fellows."

"Can the Señor not see that they are white?" she said.

"White? They look anything but white."

"Still, they are, Señor," said the woman

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stiffly, turning aside, and the stranger pursued his way to the spring.

When the children issued from the bath-rooms where they had been dressing, they were again confronted by the strange man, who had filled his pitcher and was in the act of taking a drink from the gourd which always lay on the shelf.

"Have some?" he inquired of 'Chita, presenting her the dripping gourd, with a pleasant smile. The child drew back shyly.

"I thank you, Señor," she said in English, "but I do not drink the water. I hate it."

"You hate it? Why? It is very good. And your brother, perhaps he would like some?"

"Thank you, Señor," he said, as he drained the dipper, "I think it is very fine."

"And so it is," was the response. "I now see that you *are* white," he continued, bluntly, regarding them attentively. "And you are not both boys, either, as I thought. *Como se llaman?*" * lapsing into Spanish.

* What are your names?

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"Pancho and Panchita," replied the boy, in the same language.

"Almost the same names, are they not?" said the stranger, returning to English.

"Yes, Señor," replied Pancho. "It is the short for Francis and Frances. My father was the one, and my mother the other, and we are named for them."

"Your parents, are they dead?"

"Yes, Señor, they are both dead."

"And with whom do you live?"

"With Serafina," answered Pancho, preparing to follow his sister, who was skipping gayly in advance of him.

Something in the boy's manner deterred his companion from questioning him further. They parted at the top of the hill.

"Come, Pancho," called Serafina sharply. When the boy joined her and 'Chita, she said "What was he saying to you?"

"Only asking our names," replied the boy. "I think he is English."

"That is why, perhaps, he asks questions," said the old woman.

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"Papa was English," said quick little 'Chita, on the defensive. "And of whom did he ask questions?"

"Are there not drunken Indians, and lying, and thieves, and am I one?" rejoined Serafina. "You are a silly child. Your father was of a different kind."

"Yet he looks a little like papa," replied the child. "First I thought so, but Pancho not, and then he did, too."

"Your papa was as much more good-looking than—than—Ignacio is to old Tomas."

The children screamed with laughter. "Why are you vexed, Serafina?" asked 'Chita, when their merriment had subsided.

"I am not vexed," she replied. "But — I had a thought, and it was not pleasant, that is all."

"Pancho," cried Ignacio from below. "We are going now for quail. You may come along, if Serafina will say yes."

"I have said yes, already," answered Serafina in a low and reluctant voice, which the children did not fail to notice.

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"It is a headache you have," said 'Chita, while Pancho looked at her doubtfully.

"Go, go, child," said the old woman, turning to gaze after him, as waiting no further injunction he flew down the hill to where Ignacio was standing beside the little wagon, with his gun in his hand.

"It is better that you take a hot bath," said 'Chita, "or perhaps lie down on your bed for half an hour."

But Serafina was watching the group at the wagon. Presently the stranger came out of his tent, carrying a gun, and followed by a beautiful little dog. She stood immovable, her brow darkening, till after they had started, not even answering the wave of Pancho's hand, who could not help wondering at her unusual mood. When she could see them no longer, she turned to the child standing quietly beside her.

"Bah!" she said impatiently. "To think that any one could find him resembling to your father. So few white men do you see that in your minds every one must be something like."

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"So few? Indeed you are mistaken, Serafina," said 'Chita, innocently. "We see many at Santa Juana. But never have we thought any one looked like papa before."

"*That* man is not pretty, like your father," persisted the other. "So thin, and such big bones, and such a stoop in the shoulders."

"You are right," replied 'Chita. "He is an ugly man, but he *is* like, anyway, he *is* like. And I do not think it is to be cross about such a little thing to your 'Chita who loves you so much." So saying, she lifted her arms to the old woman's neck, embracing her fervently.

Serafina's brow cleared, her firm, straight lips quivered, but the child did not see the emotion. Gathering her nursling to her bosom in the slow, deliberate fashion of her race, an unusual demonstration, but all the more tender for being rare, she rocked the child to and fro several times in her protecting arms.

"And Serafina loves her darling," she

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murmured, in a low, crooning voice. "She loves her darling; both her darlings; they are the light of her eyes; her life — her soul." But even while she caressed the child her dark, deep-set eyes wandered to the south, where the light wagon with the hunters was rapidly disappearing in the distance. For in her heart of hearts she knew that the children were right, and that the tall broad-shouldered stranger whom they had that day met for the first time bore a striking resemblance to her dead master.

The trio returned with several dozen quail, and a few cotton-tail rabbits, Pancho proudly displaying two of the latter as his share of the afternoon's spoil.

"I shot them myself, Serafina!" he exclaimed, when she came to the door of the tent, "and now I can load a gun. Ignacio showed me. After this I can provide all the game."

"Ah, that is good," said the Indian woman. "You will soon be a man, Panchito. Now, give to me, and I will skin, and

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clean and cook. We will have one for supper."

"The man said they are better to hang for a day; that it is not right to cook so soon."

"And what does that man know about cooking?" answered Serafina, scornfully. "When has he cooked in his life? Maybe never. If I will make a stew of this rabbit with some *Chili* and an onion, he will not know if it was killed to-day or yesterday, that rabbit."

"That is all right," said Pancho soothingly. "I just told you, that is all."

After supper, when the children sat with Ignacio under the *ramada,* in the moonlight, Serafina strolled off alone. After Ignacio had gone she said:

"To-night I smelled meat cooking as I walked and I went close to the tent of that wise man. And what was he doing, *chiquitos?* What think you? Only cooking the rabbit that was killed this day. So, so, it is easy to talk. Many people do that and

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then they do the things which they tell others not to do."

"I think he had nothing else to eat, perhaps," said Pancho — "perhaps he felt hungry to eat meat. And he did not say *we should* not cook it, he did not meddle with us, but only that it was better to let it hang."

Serafina did not reply; she was stretching an old quilt across a line, to serve as a screen between the beds of the children. When she had arranged it to her satisfaction they all said their prayers together, and the boy and girl were asleep almost as soon as their heads touched the pillows. After she was assured of this, Serafina threw her *rebosa* over her head and went down to the bath-house where Ignacio sat quietly smoking his last cigarette before retiring for the night.

When she saw that the stranger was with him, she made a pretence of having come for a drink. She would never have dreamed of seating herself in their company, or even speaking to either of them unless questioned. To-night, almost for the first time in her life,

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she had felt like asking some questions of Ignacio, with reference to his companion, whom she had believed would have already sought repose. Defeated in her purpose, she resolved to take the first favorable opportunity, and after a pleasant "*Buenos noches*" * in response to theirs, she once more sought the seclusion of her own tent. That night she fought a hard battle with herself, but it ended by the victory of her better nature. For the first time she had realized to the full how difficult it would be for her to reconcile duty and inclination with regard to the children. The stranger was an Englishman — that was all the resemblance, she reasoned; but in every one of his race she would now see a possible enemy; one who might work her the greatest sorrow her heart could know. Yet before she slept she said to herself: "Yes, if necessary, with the help of God, I will go and reveal, in the right quarter, who those children are. It is not for myself I live, but for them."

* Good night.

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CHAPTER VI.

A HAPPY FORTNIGHT.

MORNING brought a more cheerful mood to Serafina. After eating, the children went with Ignacio to search for mushrooms, returning with a large quantity.

"The gentleman has a headache," said 'Chita. "May I take some to him? Ignacio says he likes mushrooms. He would have come, but for the pain in his head."

"Yes, go with her, Pancho," said Serafina, without hesitation. "And say to him that I will make him some strong tea, if he wishes. That will be good for him."

Presently the children came back, 'Chita in the lead.

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"He is very sick, that gentleman," she said. "He lies on his bed, with a handkerchief around his forehead."

"You did not go in?" replied Serafina reprovingly.

"Not I, but Pancho. I could see through the open door. And he said the thought of mushrooms made him 'ill' to-day, so we have brought them back."

"Yes," said Pancho, "But he will have some tea, good and strong. He was pleased when I asked him."

"Very well," replied Serafina, at once setting about preparing the refreshing beverage. "See, Ignacio is calling. He has a bucket in his hand. He will be going for cold water, maybe. Take the tin pail and go along. I will take the tea to the gentleman myself."

The children needed no second bidding. To go anywhere or do anything in the company of Ignacio was a joy to both. He always had some curiosity to show, or a handful of *piñons* to give them, or a story to tell.

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Life was doubly worth the living when enjoyed with Ignacio.

When Serafina had prepared the tea she poured it into a bright tin pail, which she covered with a lid; then stood for a moment, reflecting. Night had brought her counsel; some rebellious emotions which yesterday had evoked, the sweet assistance of prayer had once more put fully under control. She was not sorry to have the opportunity of observing the stranger more closely, and it was with the kindliest feelings that she set out upon her neighborly errand.

"Come," said a languid voice in response to her light tap on the post of the tent.

Her eyes flashed, she nodded her head quickly, "even so he would always answer when I knocked," she murmured, and lifting the flap entered the neatly arranged tent. The sick man lifted his head at her approach.

"I have brought some tea, Señor," she said, placing the pail on a chair beside the bed. "If you will drink, it may relieve the pain." He sat up; uncovering the vessel, she poured

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some tea into a cup which was lying on the table and handed it to him.

He drank every drop. "Good!" he said, falling back on the pillow. "Hot, strong, and sweet. The first cup of tea I have had in this region, where they drink nothing but coffee. I thank you very much. How in the world did you happen to think of it?"

"It was my master who always had it for every meal," she replied. "In his country they did so—he said. And when, as often, he had a headache like you, Señor, nothing made him well like the tea, hot and strong, sweet, but without milk."

"Ah!" he responded with some show of interest. "I take it he must have been an Englishman, then."

"Yes, Señor."

"You are a good Samaritan," he said, turning his face away from the light. "If you will kindly leave the tea beside the bed, I may take another draught presently." She did as he requested, waiting a moment to see if he would speak again. Evidently he in-

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tended to dismiss her, for he said no more. She went noiselessly out of the tent, casting a sharp eye on a portmanteau which lay on the ground at the foot of the bed.

"If there was a name printed on it," she soliloquized, "that might be something, but how foolish—when I cannot read. And the name Ignacio must know, and I can very soon find it out. But how foolish again—for if it were the same, Ignacio would already have noticed, and have spoken about it, if not to me, at least to the children."

She went back to her own tent, made up the beds, swept the floor, and then taking her blankets, went down to the bath-house for her daily plunge in the hot water.

While in the bath, she heard the children and Ignacio outside. "I am here, *chiquitos*," she called. "Will you swim now in the pool?"

"Yes," answered 'Chita. "We are going to get ready."

When she came out the children were in the water. Ignacio sat on the bank, prepared for any emergency that might arise.

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She wrapped the heavy blanket shawl closely about her, so as not to take cold after the bath, and seated herself beside him.

"There are very few at the springs now, Ignacio," she said. "I have never seen so few."

"It is the dullest season," he replied. "About Christmas, or a little after, they will begin to come again. This morning those six who were camping went away. And to-day three ladies who were in that tent over there will go also. There are now only yourself and the little ones, and Mr. Garside."

"What name did you say, Ignacio?" she inquired eagerly, much to the surprise of the young man, who had never before known her to ask a question relative to strangers, or interests not her own.

"Mr. Garside," he repeated. "He is a great traveller; he has been everywhere. A nice gentleman, but to-day he has the headache."

"Yes, I know," she rejoined. "I have taken him some tea."

"Tea!" exclaimed Ignacio, "How can any one drink it, especially with a headache."

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"But he did, and he liked it. So with my master when he had the headache."

"What a strange taste have the English in some ways," said Ignacio musingly.

"Is the Señor English?" asked Serafina.

"Oh, yes, can you not see it? There is even something of the Señor Eaton in his appearance, Serafina. So have the children thought also, and I, from the first. Do you not think so?"

Serafina drew a long breath of relief. The name she had longed yet dreaded to hear bore no resemblance to that of her late master; the man who suggested him so strongly was not his brother; he would not take her nurslings away from her. Last night she had been frightened at herself when she found how bitter a struggle it would cost her to perform a duty which she feared might arise at any moment, the duty of making them known to their relative, if this stranger might prove to be he. But this morning she had not flinched, and this was the reward. So it was with usual vivacity that she replied.

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"Yes, he is something like, Ignacio. But so ugly, I think. And it may be that *all* those English are resembling to each other."

"No," said Ignacio, reflectively, in his slow, deliberate way. "I have seen many — tourists and mining men, and ship-captains, but they are of all kinds, just like the French, or Spanish, or Americans. It is something in the eye, and the voice, that resembles to Mr. Eaton."

Serafina looked up. The subject of their conversation was approaching. He seemed pale and languid. Ignacio hastened to get a camp-stool, which he placed on the bank.

"Sit there, Señor," he said. "It will be better than standing, since you are not feeling well. It is too bad that you so often have those headaches."

"Thank you," replied Mr. Garside, taking the proffered stool.

Serafina at once arose, and remained standing.

"Sit down, my good woman, sit down," he said. But the Indian woman shook her

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head. With Ignacio she might sit, when alone, but in the presence of a gentleman like her master, never.

"Soon must I call to the children to come out," she said. "And then it will be to prepare dinner. I hope your head is better, Señor?"

"Very much better," was the reply, "And I have to thank you for it. I am subject to those severe attacks, which yield only to a cup of strong tea."

"So it was with the Señor Eaton, my master. It was only tea that would cure him," she replied, but she pronounced the name in such a peculiar manner that Mr. Garside did not hear it correctly.

"I thought it was only the English who depended on tea as a panacea, but I believe you said he *was* an Englishman."

"Yes, Señor, Mr. Eaton was English," said Ignacio, his pronunciation being almost like that of Serafina.

"Aytone — Aytone," echoed Mr. Garside. "It seems Scotch, and yet not exactly."

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There was no reply to this observation; Serafina returned to her tent, and Ignacio to his own duties, as the children were now out of the water. Serafina felt a sense of elation; she had purposely directed her remarks so that the stranger might become aware of her late master's name and he had neither manifested any interest, nor shown any familiarity with it; therefore, her fears had been groundless. He could not be of kin to the children, reasoned this simple Indian woman; it was only a chance resemblance, the evil day was still far off, and then, by a strange inconsistency her mood changed; she began to reflect on the uncertainty of the prospect before the little ones, dependent as they were solely on her exertions and the kindness of Padre Gregorio. How could she find means to educate and provide for them as befitted their station in life? What if she should die, and even Father Gregorio — though such a double calamity seemed too awful to contemplate.

By the time dinner was ready she had so

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established herself in her new frame of mind, that were it not for fear of displeasing the wise and good priest, who was her best guide and counsellor, she felt equal to telling the story of her nurslings to this strange Englishman, hoping, in her simplicity, that he might be able to give her some information which would result in finding friends and a home for the children, even though in the final arrangements she should be deprived of them forever. But her customary prudence and reticence prevailed; once more committing the affair to God, she endeavored to put away the feeling of despondency which had oppressed her, with the result that when Pancho and Panchita came running up the hill, fresh and glowing from their bath, Serafina was her own kindly self again, which they were greatly rejoiced to see.

Mr. Garside fully appreciated the rabbit stew she sent him for his dinner, and came over afterwards to sit under the *ramada* where the children were playing casino with Ignacio. He took a hand in the game, and

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Serafina noticed from where she sat with her knitting, how interested and pleased he seemed to be with 'Chita, who, on her part, began to assume towards him the endearing manner, as innocent as it was captivating, which made every one who knew her love and spoil the child.

As the afternoon advanced Ignacio was in demand at the bath-house, and later the trio went off together hunting.

So the days passed, until a fortnight sped swiftly by, and Serafina announced, with great reluctance, however, that the holiday was over, and on the morrow they must return to Santa Juana. 'Chita protested loudly at the decree.

"Why not stay here always?" she exclaimed. "With Ignacio, who is so good, and Mr. Garside, who can play all kinds of games, just like papa. Oh, do stay always, Serafina — I will love and love you; do not let us go back to the ugly house and dirty, sandy Santa Juana again. Let us stay here where it is green and pleasant always, and

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where your rheumatism is so much better. O my Serafina, why must we go home?"

"I, too, would like to stay," said the Indian woman, "but how to earn money to buy bread for the children? Who to buy the baskets and the drawn-work from me if we remain at the springs always? And when the rains come, *chiquita*, it will not be so nice; for the tents are old, and the water will come through, and perhaps, even, there may be a flood. When it is raining it is good to be in a warm house, with the great open fire of Manzanitas roots, instead of to shiver here in a leaking tent, without even a stove."

"That is true," said 'Chita, sadly, "but why not wait till the rains are here?"

"Then it might be too late, *chiquita*," said Ignacio, who had been quietly leaning against one corner of the *ramada* while this protest was being made. "Who will be so sorry as I when you are gone? And Mr. Garside goes also, next week — then I shall be alone. But already little flecks of clouds

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are gathering in the sky; there will be much to do, it will soon rain."

"And where will you stay, Ignacio—where do *you* stay when it rains?"

Ignacio pointed up to the *mesa*,* where a flimsy frame structure about ten feet square stood in all its unpainted ugliness outlined against the sky. "It is there I will stay," he said, "for when it begins to rain the flood comes so sudden in the river as sometimes to fill up the valley in one night. More than once when we were not enough in a hurry all the tents have been swept away. To-morrow when you are gone, Joaquin and I must begin to carry them up to the *mesa*, out of danger."

'Chita's face lengthened; at the prospect of a flood she did not find her anticipations as pleasant as they had been. The thought reconciled her to the inevitable, and she said, turning to Mr. Garside, who at this moment made his appearance:

"We must go home to-morrow, and you

* A high table-land.

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would better come too, or maybe the flood will sweep you away."

All laughed at this sally — all except Mr. Garside himself, who said, with genuine regret:

"Going to-morrow? How sorry I am to hear it. Now, I shall lose my little companions, and shall have to pack up and follow."

"Will you follow us?" cried 'Chita. "Oh, come to our house, Mr. Garside, and Ignacio, too. There it is warm and pleasant when it rains, and while Serafina knits, and makes drawn-work, and weaves baskets, we can all play casino, and draughts, and we will speak Spanish with you every day."

"That *would* be pleasant," said the Englishman, with a sigh. "But I am afraid, my little 'Chita, that we are only 'ships that pass in the night.'"

The puzzled expression on the faces of his listeners at once reminded the speaker that he had gone beyond their depth. "I mean," he resumed, "that we have only met

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to part and then pass on, as travellers do every day. I am a rover, 'Chita, my dear; I shall have to move again in a few days, and then—who knows where I shall go? At any rate, I cannot remain at Santa Juana."

"I should think not," said Pancho. "For what would you live there, Mr. Garside? But for a day, perhaps, you will visit us."

"Yes, yes," said Serafina, with cordial hospitality. "Promise that you will come."

The promise was given, and the next morning reiterated, 'Chita being strenuous in insisting that a day should be named for the visit, in which Ignacio was included, though he could not promise to accept, as he would be busy now for some time, getting things in readiness for the expected rains.

"On the twenty-seventh I must be in the city," said Mr. Garside. "On the morning of the twenty-sixth I shall leave here, and you will see me about ten o'clock, 'Chita. That will give us a good long day, in which to explore Santa Juana and its neighborhood,

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for I shall not have to leave until 5.15, on the last train."

This was satisfactory, but 'Chita parted from her friends with tearful eyes, notwithstanding, and it was an unusually silent little girl who perched herself beside Antonio on the homeward drive. But her spirits rose as the low *adobe* house came in sight, for after all, it was home, and before night she was skipping about the old familiar haunts, as happy and as lively as ever.

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CHAPTER VII.

A PLEASANT VISIT.

IGNACIO sat smoking on the porch of the bath-houses. He and Joaquin had been busily taking down the tents and removing them to the high ground of the *mesa*, and had well earned their half hour of rest after dinner. Joaquin lay at full length on a pile of boards, also smoking, and Mr. Garside was sending up fragrant fumes of tobacco from the corn-cob pipe which was his inseparable companion.

"They are home by now," said the Englishman, breaking the silence.

"Oh, yes," replied Ignacio. "Long since they are home. Antonio's mules are strong and quick, even with a heavy load."

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"I am interested in those children," continued Mr. Garside. "An old bachelor like me, knocking about the world, grows unfamiliar with many things—some of the best things, too. And among the best are children. I always like them."

"It is sad about them," said Ignacio. "So nice as they are, and their father such a gentleman. He came often to the springs."

"Pardon me if I seem inquisitive," rejoined Mr. Garside, "but I have become curious about them, since they have aroused my interest, I might say, affection. How does it happen that they are living with that Indian woman? Have they no friends or relatives?"

"Not in this country, Señor," replied Ignacio. "It is good that you ask about them, and I could wish that perhaps you might speak to the priest about them. It may be that being of the same country as their father, you might know their friends or relations."

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The Englishman smiled. "England is a small country, but it contains many people, Ignacio," he said. "It is not likely that I have ever heard of their relations, but I am interested in the poor little things for their own sakes. Have they any money? Is the priest of whom you speak their guardian—and where does he live?"

"In the city, he lives," replied Ignacio, "But money they have not; for the little that was left was spent long ago, and it is Serafina who supports them by her work. Sometimes, too, Padre Gregorio gives them; but he, poor man, has not much for himself."

"What a pity!" said Mr. Garside. "The father must have been an improvident man, I guess."

"Improvident?" echoed Ignacio. "What does that mean, Mr. Garside? If anything bad, he was not that, but a very good man, a very good one."

"It means careless, thoughtless in thinking of the future of his children," was the reply.

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"No, he was much troubled for them, Señor," said Ignacio. "Once he had money, but he lost it all again; his wife died; then he became sick and so — to the end."

"Did you know his wife also?" inquired Mr. Garside.

"No, she did not come here with him, but died in the city of Mexico, where he married her. Of him I have heard nothing, but Serafina has told me that the Señora Eaton was an orphan in the house of her uncle, to whom Mr. Eaton was a clerk. When the uncle would have her marry with a rich old man she would not. Then they married, those two, and it was all over with the uncle. Never would he receive them. For some years all went well, as I have said, and then he lost his money. Serafina was once the servant of the mother of Señora Eaton, and so remained with her."

"Was Mrs. Eaton a Mexican then?"

"Oh, yes. Of the family of Arturio, which is well known and of great distinction."

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The Englishman was not much concerned with the importance of the Arturio family. He said "That does not amount to much, Ignacio, for those poor little children. They cannot profit by it in any way. But why have no inquiries been made as to the relatives of the father? Did he die suddenly, leaving no instructions?"

"Very well did he inform Padre Gregorio of all things relating to his family. It was from the city that he came here to benefit by the springs, and by the advice of Padre Gregorio, who was his only friend in the city, and beside it was cheap to live in Santa Juana, and close to the springs. Here he used to come every day for a long time, always on horseback, which was good exercise for him."

"And you say that inquiries have been made about his relatives?" said Mr. Garside.

"Yes, Señor. Letters have been written, and written, but no answer comes."

"So there seems to be nothing left for them but—public charity."

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"That is how it looks, Señor. If Serafina should die what could those poor children do but go to the orphan asylum?"

"Ah! That would be sad, Ignacio. 'Chita is so sweet and attractive, while Pancho is a remarkable boy; childish in some respects for his age, but it is the childishness of innocence. In other respects he is grave beyond his years — and unusually intelligent. He is a thoughtful little fellow; no doubt he feels the situation keenly."

Ignacio was not sufficiently well versed in English to understand all that Mr. Garside meant. But he was quick enough to comprehend the gist of it, and he said:

"Pancho is the finest boy I have ever seen, Señor. If it would only come to me to be able to do it, I should like to share with him and 'Chita all that I might have."

"That is an admirable sentiment, Ignacio," said his companion. "But such good-will as yours does not often go with the possession of money." For some time

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he smoked reflectively, apparently pondering. At length he said:

"I do not suppose you could have learned, by any chance, from what part of England this man came? North or South, for instance?"

"No, Señor," was the reply. "He never spoke to me of his affairs."

"It is barely possible, of course, that I might have some knowledge of his family, though I do not think I know any one of the name."

"If you would call on Padre Gregorio he could tell you all, Señor," said Ignacio. "And it would also be a pleasure to meet him."

"I may do so while in the city," rejoined the other. "But I am such a lazy fellow, and so selfish withal, that by the time I am fairly away from them I may forget all about it."

"In this case I beg of you, do not," said Ignacio, earnestly, taking seriously what Mr. Garside had said, in his own peculiar way. "God knows if it might not be after all a

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lucky thing that you have met them. At least it will not be of any harm."

"If for no other reason than to oblige *you*, Ignacio, I will do it," was the rejoinder. "Although it has always been a trouble to me getting mixed up in things I cannot remedy."

This ended the conversation. Ignacio returned to his work and Mr. Garside went to his tent for his customary afternoon nap.

A few days afterwards he found himself on the broad piazza of the old *adobe* house, shaking hands with Pancho and 'Chita, who had been looking out for him since early morning.

"But where is Ignacio?" asked Pancho, after the first greetings were over.

"He could not come," said Mr. Garside. "He and Joaquin are very busy these days. They have moved all the tents up to the *mesa* land, and to-day they are taking the bath-houses down. Do they do that every year?"

"Yes, Señor," said Serafina. "They put

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them apart every year, though sometimes they have all their trouble for nothing, for, if it does not rain there will have been no need. Once though, when they did not do it the flood came and all the bath-tubs floated away."

"Did they get them again?" asked 'Chita. "Do I remember that time, Serafina?"

"You should know best, *chiquita*," said Serafina, when all had finished laughing at the *naïve* remark.

"Yes, they got them," said Pancho, "but some were broken. Don't you remember, 'Chita, when the drug-store went down the river like a boat, with Mr. Brown and his wife inside?"

"Oh, yes, I remember *that*," replied the little girl. "And the *Aduana** fell over on its side, and all the shops went along down to the springs, and rushed past, oh, so quick, so quick, that no one could stop them. And the chickens and the ducks, Señor, they looked so funny."

*Custom House.

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"But you here, on this little elevation, were all safe, I take it?"

"Yes, Señor," said Pancho. "Papa and I stood on the porch and watched it all. And afterwards so many came here. Papa asked them, and they had coffee, and slept on the porch and in the barn for days and days."

"Now, if the Señor will come, there is ready a cup of tea," said Serafina. The "Señor" complied willingly. After this refreshment he expressed himself as anxious to begin the programme of the day, but first declared that until they had visited the candy-shop he would not be able to undertake the arduous labor before him.

"But there is no candy-shop here, Señor," said 'Chita, who had possessed herself of his hand, Pancho walking on the other side.

"What? No candy for sale in Santa Juana!" he exclaimed.

"Oh, yes," was the reply, "but Serafina says it is not very much." She said "mooch," and Mr. Garside laughed.

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"Why do you laugh, Señor?" she asked, looking gravely up into his face. "Is it that you think my good Serafina does not know? She does, Señor. She is very wise; but for her we would do many foolish things."

"No, 'Chita, I was not laughing at Serafina, but at your quaint English. But it is very sweet, I do assure you; I like to hear it."

"'Chita is nice," said Pancho, flashing a brilliant smile at his sister, "but sometimes she talks too much. Still, she is little, and you must excuse her, Señor. The truth is that Serafina cannot afford that we buy candy, and that is why she tells that it is not good."

"That may be," replied Mr. Garside, cheerfully. "Anyway, we must test it. Where have they some for sale?"

"At the curio store," said Pancho, "and that you will enjoy, Señor, for there are many beautiful things to be found there."

The candy was purchased and pronounced

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very good, even by Mr. Garside, who declared himself something of a judge. Much to the amazement of the children he asked for "lollipops," "toffee," and "bull's-eyes," but as the polite storekeeper had none of these delicacies in stock, they were fain to content themselves with chocolate creams, peppermints and burnt almonds.

Filled with the spirit of generosity, Mr. Garside wanted to fill the pockets of the children with various curios, which Pancho very sensibly refused to accept, saying that they could examine them every day from the outside of the windows, if they chose, and that they were only kept for the tourists, who purchased them as souvenirs.

They next went to the church, which interested Mr. Garside, and it was there the children learned, for the first time, that he was a Catholic. Then they took him to the "monument," a small obelisk of granite, enclosed by an iron fence, which Pancho explained was the dividing line between Mexico and California. After he had finished,

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'Chita took up the theme. Setting her little feet firmly on the ground at some distance apart, she said, "Here I am in Mexico," pointing to one foot, "and here in California. If I am bad and they want to arrest me, no matter how many *rurales* * come, they can not do it until I take my one foot and put it close to the other, so that I am on their side, and if I go two or three paces away, on this side or that, they cannot arrest me at all."

"So you already begin to comprehend the law of extradition," said Mr. Garside, smiling. "I am sure, though, you will take care not to deserve arrest from either party."

"Once," she calmly continued, ignoring the reference to herself, "once there was no fence around this monument. No, it was not this, but an old one. And some people called *vandals* came, and cut off *here* a chip, and broke off with rocks *there* another, until it was an ugly sight indeed. And the men came and took down the old monument and it lay a long time in the sand, till one

*Mounted police of Mexico, who are always on the lookout on the borders for smugglers and criminals.

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day Desiderio Orosco came and had it chopped and cut into little pieces to sell in his curio store. And then the *rurales* were going to arrest him, but he paid, and they did not. Serafina says that he made much money by selling those little pieces of stone."

"Yes," said Pancho, "and pretty soon they came and built up this new one, with the iron fence around."

"And now the *vandals* come no more, or if they do," said 'Chita, "they dare not climb over the fence, or the *rurales* will catch them. Do you know any *vandals*, Mr. Garside?"

"I am afraid I do," said the Englishman ruefully. "Indeed I don't know but what I have been occasionally a sort of one, myself. Where did you hear the word, 'Chita?"

"From my papa," said the child. "He did not like them, and I am sure you cannot ever have been one, Señor?"

Mr. Garside clasped the little hand more closely in his own. "Well, perhaps not,"

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he rejoined, "and now, what else have you to show me?"

"Perhaps you would like to visit the *Aduana*," said Pancho, leading the way.

Presently the gentleman found himself being introduced to several sober-looking Mexican officials, none of whom, with the exception of the chief, could speak English. The children spoke to them in Spanish, and evidently impressed them with a sense of his importance, for they were exceedingly polite and affable. From there they strolled down to the river and sat for some time under the willows, while Pancho described how the stream had several times changed its course on the occurrence of great floods.

"And why do they always rebuild in the same place?" asked Mr. Garside. "It would be far more desirable, it seems to me, to locate the town on that elevation yonder, close to where you live; then there would be no danger from the river."

"I do not know, Señor," said the boy; "always they build again where they were and

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always they say, 'it will be the last time that the water comes this way The current is now changed for good.' And again — it is the same way."

"They are not progressive," said Mr. Garside. "And yet this land, under proper cultivation and with plenty of water, might be made a Paradise. It is the lack of ambition — and no doubt — poverty — which leaves it as it is."

"See, through the trees," said 'Chita. "There is the red flag, waving from the house; that means dinner is ready."

"A novel idea," said Mr. Garside. "One can see it from almost any point in the neighborhood. We must not keep Serafina waiting; let us go."

Serafina had exhausted her culinary skill, and was pleased to see that Mr. Garside did justice to the savory viands set before him, to which Ignacio had secretly contributed quail and lettuce, grown in his mother's garden four miles away. He was there himself when they arrived, much to the delight of

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the children. "I had to come for the mail," he said, but he needed no excuse. After dinner he took them across the line in his two-seated light wagon, where Mr. Garside had an opportunity of seeing some flourishing *ranches* belonging to Americans, in great contrast to those of their Mexican neighbors. When they returned the train had already arrived. A hurried stop at the house for his valise, and a kindly good-by to Serafina, and they once more returned to the station.

As the Englishman put forth both hands to take leave of the children, he experienced a curious sensation. The tie of race is strong; in some sense he was partly of the same blood as those two gentle, lovable, helpless children, cast helplessly, one might say, upon the desert of the world.

"Good-by!" he said. "This is the bother of making friends to a fellow like me, always travelling about. One has to leave them. Good-by, God bless you!" and before they could utter a word he jumped on

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the lower step of the train and was gone. They saw him shake Ignacio's hand; the train began to move, and 'Chita cried out:

"Get off; get off, Ignacio — or you will be taken away."

The next moment 'Chita found herself lifted into the wagon; Pancho climbed up beside her, and they drove home in silence. Serafina was awaiting them in the doorway.

"He is gone, Serafina; he is gone," said 'Chita. "In such a hurry at the last he went, that there was no time to say a word. Oh, how sorry I am that he is not coming any more; never since papa did I see so nice a gentleman."

"Come," said Serafina, "I will give you bread and honey. That will make you feel better. Thank you, Ignacio, and come soon again."

'Chita followed her into the house, appearing a moment later on the porch, as she called, "Pancho, Pancho, come in for bread and honey!" But her brother did not hear her; he was sitting behind the big pepper

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tree with his head in his hands, trying, with dry throat, to swallow the tears that were seeking an outlet. "I wanted to ask him to write to us," he thought. "I wanted to, but I was afraid. And now we shall never hear of him again." In Pancho, too, the tie of race was strong.

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CHAPTER VIII.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

After the departure of Mr. Garside, Serafina's mind was, for a time, at least, at rest. He had come and gone; she had put no stone in his way; on the contrary, she had given him a clue to the identity of the children, of which he might and surely would have availed himself, had there been any recognition on his part of the name, which, although she did not know it, was quite a common one. But when several days had passed, and she took up her ordinary life with all its dull, unvarying threads once more, she slowly began to realize, as she had never done before, that while it had always been sufficient for her and would always continue to

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be, such could not be the case with regard to the children. She began to be impatient for their sakes, looking daily for a letter from Padre Gregorio, and becoming despondent when none came. And the more she reflected the more she felt convinced that she had been remiss in not telling their story to Mr. Garside, who, after all, was a countryman of their father, and who, she began to say to herself, might possibly do something for them of his own accord, through the sympathy which she felt he entertained towards them. Her mind became a prey to a host of conflicting emotions; always quiet and self-repressed, she went about the house in a melancholy way, which could not fail to make itself evident to the children, who felt the subtle but inexplicable change.

It was with a feeling of joy that they saw Ignacio dismount from his horse one evening in front of the door.

"I am come to spend the night," he said, as they ran forward to meet him. "To-

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morrow, by five, I must start for the city, to attend as a witness in a lawsuit there."

"Ah, that is good!" said Serafina. "Perhaps you may be able to do an errand for me at the same time, Ignacio."

"Certainly, anything that I can," he replied. "But I must be back to-morrow night, and that is why I go early on horseback, not waiting for the train, and come back the same way. What can I do for you, Serafina?"

"I will tell you later," she replied, glancing significantly at the children. "Go, Ignacio, put away your horse, and come in to supper."

Casino and checkers, with some music, filled up the evening. Pancho brought an old guitar which had belonged to his father, and Ignacio played all the airs he knew; gay waltzes and melancholy *danzas*. Then he sang "*La Golondrina*" and "*La Paloma*," winding up with the sprightly "*La Rumba*," in which Pancho and his sister joined, singing and dancing, while Serafina,

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smiling over the basket she was weaving, looked like her own serene self once more. But the evening came to an end at last, and after the children had retired Ignacio lingered, feeling that Serafina had something particular to say to him. After putting away sundry articles which were out of place, she came and sat in front of him, on the opposite side of the table.

"Ignacio," she said solemnly, "I have never been so sad in my mind as now."

"And why, Serafina?" he answered, not a little surprised.

"I am sorry that I did not tell to Mr. Garside more about those children. For them it looks that their relations will do nothing. Perhaps, if he knew, he might have pity on them."

"And how?"

"Well — I believe he has money. He is not married — he was good to them. Perhaps, if no more, he might have asked about their relations when he goes back to his own country. I cannot say what it is that I feel,

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but I am sorry that I did not say more to him."

"And why did you not, Serafina?"

"Well, I was proud. I did not wish that a stranger should know how sad it is, or how poor we are — and then I feared to displease Padre Gregorio."

"But what to do now, Serafina?"

"The Englishman may be still in the city. If the Padre knew he might speak to him."

"I do not think so, Serafina. Many and many Englishmen come here every year; the Padre could not tell which of them was Mr. Garside, unless in some way he should be introduced to him. And would it be proper, do you think, that Padre Gregorio would go about looking for him, just to tell him that those children have not been able to find their relations? Oh, no, I do not think it."

Ignacio spoke positively, though very gently, as was his wont on all occasions. Serafina had great respect for his judgment, and not without reason, for in spite of the

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limitations which surrounded him, he was old and wise beyond his years. For a moment she did not answer, but leaned her head on her hands, sighing heavily. At length she said:

"It may be that you are right, Ignacio, you are nearly always right. But there is something else. When we first saw him — the Englishman—the children said, and you, that he was like to their father; but I would not see it. Yet I did see it, Ignacio, but I would not, because for the fear that he might take them away from me. I sinned in my thoughts, but I asked God to take away the temptation from me; I asked if it should be the will of God, that it might fall out well for the children, with no thought for myself. And after that, Ignacio, my mind was calm again. I spoke to him of the name of my master, but he knew it not, and then I was troubled no more. And now, since he is gone, again it comes to me that he is like my master, and that if some one who knew would tell him all, good

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might come for those poor children. By day I think of it, and at night I dream."

"Since how long?" asked Ignacio, much impressed by her earnestness.

"Since three or four days."

"And what would you have me do?"

"Tell it to Padre Gregorio, and what he will do, that will be right."

"In that I shall be glad to help you. It can be of no harm, and you will be satisfied, at least. But he may have gone away before this."

"That may be so. Yet, we should make a trial, at least."

"To-morrow about twelve I shall be finished with my lawsuit. Then I will go to Padre Gregorio and tell him. But, do I mistake—Mr. Garside, if I do not forget, spoke of going to him. Yes—I now remember that he did."

"I thank you very much, Ignacio. May the good God bless you. And I know that to tell Padre Gregorio will at least make easy my mind. And if the Padre will only

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say that I am foolish, then even, I shall be content," concluded Serafina, taking up her candle, much relieved that her case was about to be presented by one than whom she thought none would be more fitting, or more welcome to the priest, with whom Ignacio was a great favorite.

A few days later Father Gregorio had taken his mail from the box, and was about leaving the post office when a gentleman in front of him dropped a letter on the floor. "Excuse me," said the priest, as he picked it up, "this belongs to you, I believe." The tall Englishman turned around; his arms were full of newspapers. "Thank you very much," he said, extending his hand, but as the priest was about to place the envelope in it he paused suddenly.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "But are you Mr. Garside?"

"That is my name," was the reply.

"This is my own writing," said the priest.

"Your writing, Father?" exclaimed the gentleman, who had at once recognized him

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as a clergyman. He glanced at the envelope; it was covered with postmarks. "It has followed me all over the world," he continued, "and if I mistake not, there is another like it."

"Perhaps three," said the priest. "I have written three within two years."

"This is a mystery," said the gentleman.

"It will not be so long," replied Father Gregorio. "You are stopping here for some time?"

"For a few days only," said Mr. Garside. "I am a globe-trotter, Father."

"That explains," said the priest. "I advise that you read the letters and then call upon me."

"Very well," was the rejoinder. "You are Father Gregorio, no doubt."

"That is my name."

"I was about to pay you a visit. I am greatly interested in — but that will keep till we meet."

"When may I expect you?"

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"This afternoon, about three. Will that be convenient?"

"Entirely so," said the priest, with a courteous bow as they parted.

At eleven o'clock Father Gregorio sat in his study, his mind full of perplexed thoughts. "A gentleman to see you, Father," announced his housekeeper.

"Show him in," said the priest.

"As I had expected," he said, arising to meet Mr. Garside, "and the omen is good. Be seated, sir."

"Father," began the Englishman, without further preface, "I ought to beg your pardon for coming four hours ahead of our appointment, but I thought I would risk incommoding you. The fact is, I want to go down to Santa Juana on the five o'clock train."

"Thank God!" said the priest fervently. "You will do something, then, for those dear children?"

"Father, I have been living with them for the past three weeks. Can you believe it—

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it was about them that I had thought of coming to see you. They interested me beyond measure. And they are my cousin's children — my cousin's children. Poor little beggars."

The priest was surprised. "Where have you seen them?" he inquired.

"At the Hot Springs. I went down there for a little shooting, and a trial of the baths. I am inclined to be rheumatic. They were there with the Indian woman who has cared for them so long. Your letters were very explicit, and now it is my turn to explain. I have been travelling about the world for four years, and they have never caught up with me until now."

There was much to be said between the two. Father Gregorio learned that Mr. Garside and his cousin had been like brothers in their youth — the late Mr. Eaton having been reared and educated by his uncle, the father of Mr. Garside.

But unfortunately there had been a quarrel with his uncle. Mr. Eaton had come to

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America, breaking off all intercourse with his relations. At first there had been resentment on the part of his cousin, but that had long since passed away.

"And you never suspected," said the priest, "that the children might have been his?"

"No, certainly not. How could I have done so? I did not know he had ever been married, or anything about him."

"But the name?"

"Ignacio and the Indian woman called it 'Aytone,' and I never heard the children mention it. And to think that I might have missed them. Thank God that I did not."

"Amen," said Father Gregorio, with fervor. "You will take them to England?"

"Next week. My sister will be delighted to have them. She was very fond of Frank."

"And now comes Serafina's hour of sorrow," said the priest. "Her life will be empty. I fear it will not be long."

"And why, Father?" replied Mr. Garside, in evident surprise. "The good wo-

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man shall accompany them. I have not thought of anything else. As for you, there is no way save that of eternal gratitude in which to show my appreciation of your kindness to those poor little orphans." As he finished speaking Ignacio was announced. More explanations followed, and there was never a more contented trio than the three who sat down to lunch together in Padre Gregorio's little dining-room.

The little family was taking an early supper when they arrived at Santa Juana, Father Gregorio tapped at the door, his companion remaining outside.

"I have brought you an English cousin!" he said, when Serafina opened it, intending to quiz them a little before introducing him. But Pancho had caught sight of the tall figure in the shadow. He stepped forward.

"It is Mr. Garside," he said. "I see him. Oh, Father, is it true?"

But 'Chita had already sprung to his arms. There were tears in his eyes as he kissed her soft little cheeks.

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"I said it, I said it," she exclaimed, again and again. "I knew he was like papa."

When Serafina heard that she was not to be parted from her nurslings, her joy was unbounded. The joyful news soon spread through the town, and Ignacio paused on his homeward journey to offer his congratulations. Padre Gregorio returned to the city next day, but Mr. Garside remained to superintend the removal. It was a goodly cartload of furniture that went down to the springs the day of the departure; everything had been given to Ignacio. The whole village turned out to see them off, every one invoking the choicest of God's blessings upon them. But it was Ignacio on whom their tearful eyes rested last, as he stood some distance apart from the crowd, his lips framing the heartfelt "*Adios*" they could not utter.

That day he wore his holiday shirt of soft grey flannel, with knickerbockers of brown velveteen, and the fine carved Mexican belt of polished leather, which was his only van-

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ity, as well as his most cherished treasure, for it had once belonged to the old captain, of whom he was the worthiest descendant.

And it is thus, in his picturesque attire, a red silk handkerchief, their parting gift, knotted loosely about his throat, standing with head uncovered, until they could see him no more, that Pancho and 'Chita, far across the seas, in their happy English home, will remember him forever.

* * * * *

And Padre Gregorio? Many a letter does he receive from them; they will never forget him. Nothing would give them greater pleasure than the realization of the visit they have been urging him to make for several years. But he is too old for that, he says; and is content, evening after evening, to sit and muse upon the past, the soft murmur of the broad Pacific keeping time to the burden of his thoughts, while the golden glory of the setting sun drops slowly into the blue waves before his reminiscent eyes.

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